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Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Governmental History Documentation Project
Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr. Era

Virginia Knight

CALIFORNIA'S FIRST LADY, 1954-1958

An Interview Conducted by
Miriam Feingold Stein
and
Sarah Sharp
1977-1978

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GOODWIN AND VIRGINIA KNIGHT

Campaigning for Governor, 1954

Photograph courtesy Virginia Knight

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PREFACE

Covering the years 1953 to 1966, the Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Sr., Oral History Series is the second phase of the Governmental History Documentation Project begun by the Regional Oral History Office in 1969. That year inaugurated the Earl Warren Era Oral History Project, which produced interviews with Earl Warren and other persons prominent in politics, criminal justice, government administration, and legislation during Warren's California era, 1925 to 1953.

The Knight-Brown series of interviews carries forward the earlier inquiry into the general topics of: the nature of the governor's office, its relationships with the legislature and with its own executive departments, biographical data about Governors Knight and Brown and other leaders of the period, and methods of coping with the rapid social and economic changes of the state. Key issues documented for 1953-1966 were: the rise and decline of the Democratic party, the impact of the California Water Plan, the upheaval of the Vietnam War escalation, the capital punishment controversy, election law changes, new political techniques forced by television and increased activism, reorganization of the executive branch, the growth of federal programs in California, and the rising awareness of minority groups. From a wider view across the twentieth century, the Knight-Brown period marks the final era of California's Progressive period, which was ushered in by Governor Hiram Johnson in 1910 and which provided for both parties the determining outlines of government organization and political strategy until 1966.

The Warren Era political files, which interviewers had developed cooperatively to provide a systematic background for questions, were updated by the staff to the year 1966 with only a handful of new topics added to the original ninety-one. An effort was made to record in greater detail those more significant events and trends by selecting key participants who represent diverse points of view. Most were queried on a limited number of topics with which they were personally connected; a few narrators who possessed unusual breadth of experience were asked to discuss a multiplicity of subjects. Although the time frame of the series ends at the November 1966 election, when possible the interviews trace events on through that date in order to provide a logical baseline for continuing study of succeeding administrations. Similarly, some narrators whose experience includes the Warren years were questioned on that earlier era as well as the Knight-Brown period.

The present series has been financed by grants from the California State Legislature through the California Heritage Preservation Commission and the office of the Secretary of State, and by some individual donations. Portions of several memoirs were funded partly by the California Women in Politics Project under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, including a matching grant from the Rockefeller Foundation; the two projects were produced concurrently in this office, a joint effort made feasible by overlap of narrators, topics, and staff expertise.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative direction of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library, and Willa Baum, head of the Office.

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Gabrielle Morris, Project Coordinator

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Virginia Knight presents in this oral history a very personal, proud and affectionate view of her late husband, Goodwin Knight, the 31st governor of California (1953-1958). Here we see the private side of the public figure, the ebullient, conscientious Republican leader known as Goodie to government officials and private citizens alike. The interview is a key segment of the Regional Oral History Office documentation of the administration of Governor Knight.

The narrative provides a charming portrait of the courtship and marriage of Virginia Carlson and Knight and their idyllic life in the handsome Victorian governor's mansion in Sacramento. The mansion, now restored as a state historical museum, gathers and maintains extensive archives on the state's first families, including much information provided by Mrs. Knight.

She was a vivacious young war widow in Los Angeles when she met Knight, who was a guest on a television public affairs program which she co-hosted. Then lieutenant governor, Knight was a longtime acquaintance of her mother's. Remembering that acquaintance when he was bereaved in November 1952 by the death of his wife Arvilla, he inquired if Virginia had remarried. She hadn't. Virginia's understanding of his loss and a mutual belief in prayer, as well as an enjoyment of life, brought them close, and in 1954 they were married.

Behind the gala round of celebrations for the newlyweds and the official ceremonies involving the governor and his lady, there were from the beginning intimations of discord within the Republican party. Mrs. Knight recalls that their honeymoon was interrupted by news that agreement on Knight's choice for officers of the state central committee had been challenged by then vice president Nixon.

Her indignation is clear as she describes the increasing pressures from Nixon, Senator William Knowland, and President Eisenhower that led to Knight agreeing to run for the Senate in 1958 so Knowland could run for governor. She remembers the friends who turned out to help Goodie campaign and the many Democrats who declared themselves Republican for a Day to vote for him.

The interview continues with insights into Knight's busy life after the governorship: broadcasting a news commentary program, organizing a bank, and being involved in various charitable activities. In an addendum to the taped interview, Mrs. Knight has written a reminiscence of presidents and other notables she has known.

Mrs. Knight was interviewed in May 1977 by Dr. Mimi Stein and again in October 1978 by Dr. Sarah Sharp to augment the earlier session. Preliminary research for the interviews had been conducted in Governor Knight's papers at the Stanford University library, for which Mrs. Knight has written an introduction, "The Golden Heritage of Goodwin Knight." The interviews were recorded in the handsome home in Los Angeles which the Knights had shared until his death in May 1970. The tapes were transcribed and a lightly edited copy of the transcript was sent to Mrs. Knight for review.

From her extensive collection of memorabilia, Mrs. Knight selected many photographs, press clippings, invitations, letters, campaign materials, and several commemorative poems she had written, all of which she copied and interleaved with the pages of the transcript. She also provided a number of additional comments, occasionally drawing on other published accounts of Republican politics in the 1950s. The resulting compilation is a remarkable documentation of the life Virginia and Goodwin Knight shared in the governor's mansion and in the spotlight of state and national politics.

Completion of the oral history was delayed for several years, during which time Mrs. Knight was dealing with ongoing problems in settling her husband's business affairs, and the funding for the Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. Brown, Sr. Gubernatorial Eras project came to an end. Recognizing the importance of having as much information as possible about Governor Knight widely accessible, Mrs. Knight in 1986 agreed to support final preparation of the revised transcript, with a few sample illustrations from her collection. Her interview, presented here, provides a rare view of a well-loved governor faced with adversity, and of his devoted wife.

All the materials assembled by Mrs. Knight have been deposited in The Bancroft Library with the transcript as she revised it and are available to scholars there. There also exists a 94-page oral history recorded with Goodwin Knight in 1967 by the Oral History Office of Columbia University, which is presently closed to use. Researchers will wish to contact Columbia to find out when that interview becomes available.

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March 1987
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I MEETING GOODWIN KNIGHT AND COURTSHIP

[Date of Interview: May 20, 1977]##

Stein: How did you first meet Governor Knight?

Knight: It is very significant, Mimi, that you should be here on this particular day, May 20. It was on this day twenty-six years ago that I met Lieutenant Governor Goodwin J. Knight on a television program.[1951] I was the producer of the program. It was just preceding Memorial Day. Because I was a World War II war widow, I gave a little speech about the importance of the Poppy Program. I sold Governor Knight and all the other members of the panel a poppy. That was our original meeting.

Stein: Tell me about the television program.

Knight: It was called "Tele-forum"--a political, civic, current-event discussion program that was on live once a week. The audience would call in questions to the panel. I would take the questions from them on the air--re-phrase them, appropriately, and give them to the moderator, Freeman Lusk, who would then present the questions to the guests.

Stein: I see. And Lieutenant Governor Knight was one of the panelists that week?

Knight: Yes. It was "I am an American Day." A friend of mine, and my family's, Erle Cocke, Jr., from Georgia, was the national commander of the American Legion that year. He was to be the principal speaker at the Hollywood Bowl. Lieutenant Governor Knight was also to speak. I thought it would be appropriate to have a veterans program that week with members of the American Legion to be the

##This symbol indicates that a tape segment has ended or begun.
For a guide to the tapes, see page 60.

Knight: participants. My mother (who was active in politics, war bond drives, civic programs and the Legion Auxiliary) and I called prominent legionnaires and invited them to be on the program: Louis Gough, former state and national commander, and Stanley Dunmire, former state commander, were among those we called who accepted our invitation. Incidentally, my stepfather, E. B. Hersherberger, had organized Uptown Post #602. That is how I was able to know these friends personally.

We thought of Goodwin Knight. He was a legionnaire. I remembered that he had sent me a congratulatory telegram, through his office, when I was installed as president of Uptown Unit's auxiliary on July 21, 1948. We left word at his office. But to make sure--my mother and I called at his beautiful home at 344 South Las Palmas (just a mile from here). His lovely wife, Arvilla Knight, greeted us and promised to see that he got the message.

(How strange fate is. Little did I dream, as I thanked Mrs. Goodwin J. Knight for her courtesy, that one day I would be Mrs. Goodwin J. Knight!)

After the ceremonies at the Hollywood Bowl, Commander Cocke and Commanders Louis Gough and Stanley Dunmire and I drove out to the San Fernando Valley for an early dinner. It was delightful, but I was responsible for a television show--and was anxious to be sure and get to the studio on time! The star, Commander Cocke, and the others were with me, so I knew they would be there. But I was concerned if Goodwin Knight would be there. He was!

We were in the make-up room. He was seated next to me. He remembered my mother through political campaigns and war bond drives. He learned that I was a World War II widow, and said, "I have a nice friend that you should meet, Sam Briggs, a widower." He was so pleasant and engaging with that warm smile and personality.

I also remember Arvilla Knight on that occasion. She was blonde and beautiful. She wore a navy blue skirt and a white jacket and a navy blue beret. She was most gracious and complimented me on my "poppy speech." Incidentally, we had neglected to tell Mrs. Knight to tell her husband to bring his legion cap! Fortunately my brother, Ralph, who was present, had his, and the lieutenant governor borrowed my brother's cap!

My mother, Emma, had known Goodwin Knight for a long time and participated in all his campaigns. She first met him in the Merriam campaign for governor. Frank Merriam was from Hopkinton, Iowa. He managed Herbert Hoover's presidential campaign in California--another Iowan. You can imagine my family's enthusiasm for this, because we were from Fort Dodge, Iowa! I vividly remember campaign conversation at the dinner table when I was a young girl, and I remember passing out handbills for Merriam for governor. And that is how my mother and Goodwin Knight first met.

Knight: Politics was the original instrument that brought Goodwin Knight into our lives. My mother always supported Goodwin Knight--for judge, lieutenant governor, and, of course, governor. During the war she was chairman of the war bond drives for the Federated Women's Clubs of Los Angeles, and she invited him to speak at war bond drives and rallies.

So, it is really through my mother's interest in politics and civic affairs, and our interest in the American Legion, that we came to meet.

Stein: That's quite remarkable. Did you field any questions to him during that television program?

Knight: No. I didn't give out questions. They came to me from the viewers who called in from the television audience.

Stein: When was the next time you saw the lieutenant governor?

Knight: It was a year and a half later, after his wife passed away. He called my mother. He said, "Mrs. Hershberger, I am the loneliest man in town. I remember seeing your daughter on a television program and that she was a war widow. Did she ever marry?" Mother said, "No." He said, "Do you think she would go out to dinner with me?" Then mother said, "Well, she's right here. Why don't you ask her?" This was a Monday morning and he made the date for Thursday evening at six o'clock.

Thursday arrived. We had just purchased a new television set that day and I said, "Oh, mother, I would like to stay home and watch television!" He was older and I didn't remember him too well, although I had seen his picture in the paper. Then I remembered the tears and heartbreak that I'd had and I thought: Well, my goodness, it's awfully nice of him to ask me out. I'll give him some books to read and then Mother and I will perhaps try to introduce him to a nice lady, a woman a little bit older.

He arrived promptly at six o'clock. He looked very handsome in a good-looking grey suit and a blue shirt. Of all places, he took me to the private, exclusive, and conservative Jonathan Club! It showed how open he was because many of his friends would observe him, a widower, out with a lady--which, incidentally, was the first date that he'd had since his wife passed away. He was so nice, but his whole conversation was about his wife and his grief. But I remember, he remarked about my eyes. He looked at me across the table and said, "You have lovely violet eyes."

I understood his pain because I had been through the same experience. I gave him three books to read which had helped me during my heartache: Peace of Soul by Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen and Peace of Mind by Rabbi Liebman and The Life Everlasting by Marie

Knight: Corelli, which he thoughtfully had re-bound for me. He appreciated the books and my friendship. I was a good listener. He called me and took me out to dinner when he wasn't in Sacramento. I found that I was beginning to like him before he was really noticing me! Then, I really knew how much I was beginning to care for him when he accepted an invitation from a beautiful movie star to attend some special occasion at Ciro's, a popular night club on the Sunset Strip. His engaging personality, his warm smile even with his heartache--were beginning to touch my heart.

Stein: It's a very touching story.

Knight: I am very fortunate. I have been blessed with two fine husbands. I met my first husband, Charles Lyle Carlson, who was from Nebraska, when I worked at the Warner Brothers Forum Theatre. He and three other young bankers lived a block from the theatre. Lyle worked in the head office of the California Bank on Spring Street in downtown Los Angeles (where Goodwin Knight, young lawyer, had a law office years before in the same block). Lyle was tall and very handsome--with a lovely smile, and for months we smiled a lot at each other! Finally, on Christmas Eve, 1939, when he purchased a theatre ticket from me he said, "When are you and I going to have a date?" My heart started racing and I didn't hesitate! "How about tomorrow night?" Christmas night. He called for me at the side exit at 10:00. I remember I had a cold but I was happy.

(I am telling this because it actually was because of him that I met Goodwin Knight on that patriotic program in memory of those who were killed in the war.)

Lyle and I drove around this area where I now reside. (I have always lived within a mile of here and so did the governor.) We looked at the beautifully decorated homes with their Christmas trees shining in the windows. (Goodwin and I did the same thing every Christmas.)

We had a glorious courtship and a lovely wedding at Bethel Lutheran Church. I had four bridesmaids. We were married on June 28, 1940, and had a delightful life for two years and seven months until it was interrupted and he was called into the service. I travelled to Texas, Arizona, and Nebraska to be with him until he left for overseas. We were married four years and two months.

If I hadn't experienced the pain through the loss of my loved one, I would not have had the understanding to help and comfort Goodwin Knight when he came into my life while he was in the depths of the same dark valley that I had been in eight years before. We have to go through these experiences in order to understand what somebody else goes through.

Knight: I miss him terribly.

I have been busy these last seven years. Among the responsibilities of being a widow, the responsibility of cataloguing his papers, which I have donated to his alma mater, Stanford University, has been time consuming. I have given Stanford over 300,000 items--speeches, pictures, scrapbooks, mementos, newspaper stories, tapes and other memorabilia. You should have seen the boxes piled here! I was pleased that I was able to do this for Stanford--because he loved Stanford University. I wrote "The Golden Heritage of Goodwin Knight," which Stanford compiled and published to mark the dedication of Governor Knight's papers on October 5, 1975. That was twenty-two years to the day that he became governor. I'm great on anniversaries!

Stein: Yes, I'll say.

Knight: That's where he had so many of his fond dreams of being governor--walking through the halls of Stanford. He also spoke at his graduation. You should interview a man by the name of Lynford Hess, his dear friend through the years. From Stanford, Goodwin and Lyn went to the capitol one day and Goodwin said, "Someday I'm going to be governor!" He predicted that for himself during his days at Stanford. Incidentally, because of his active days at Manual Arts High School; yell leader, student body president, etc., in his graduation year book it was predicted that "Goodwin Knight would become governor of New York!"

II HONEYMOON AND STRUGGLE WITH RICHARD NIXON FOR THE VICE-CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, 1954

Knight: The governor and I had a lovely and interesting courtship. He took me out to dinner, to meetings where he made a speech, family gatherings. We were married on August 2, 1954 at the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour at 12:00 noon. Only members of our families and relatives were present. We had a charming wedding luncheon at the Beverly Hills Hotel. After the festivities and dancing to the song "Virginia," written by composer-pianist, Eddie Oliver, as a surprise to us, we left for Balboa for our honeymoon to board the beautiful yacht, "The Mojo," which belonged to our dear friend, Frank Muller. (Dick Nixon later spent leisurely hours on the same yacht.) Gloriously happy, we sailed to Catalina Island.

The next day, August 3, there was a phone call from A. Ronald Button. He was the Republican National Committeeman. He said, "I know you are on your honeymoon, Governor, but you have had the biggest double-cross in California politics! You had better get back here right away!"

We lost no time in returning to the dock at Balboa, where Mr. Button was waiting for us. Carefully, they were able to keep this from the press. I saw my new husband and his new friend go into action. I say "new friend" because in the past he was not a close friend of Knight. He was a close friend of Earl Warren.

I saw my husband in a political fight for the first time. I had seen and heard him make speeches. But this was different! There I was a bride--and I am sure many thoughts raced through my mind: Is this what political life is like?

Ron Button, through the years, laughingly said that he "spent our honeymoon with us."

Knight: They called all over California--told the committeemen and the proxies of the double-cross and that Howard Ahmanson was Governor Knight's choice for vice-chairman--not Ray Arbuthnot, who was Dick Nixon's choice. (There were many surprised people at the other end of the line.) The governor and Mr. Button got the commitments and then Mr. Button left us. Then we, on our honeymoon yacht, returned to Catalina.

Stein: Can you tell me a little more about the race for the vice-chairmanship between Howard Ahmanson and Ray Arbuthnot?

Knight: As I have just related, Mr. Button heard about what was going on behind my husband's back and called him on our honeymoon. It has all been recorded in the press. My husband later appointed Mr. Button to a key post in his administration, treasurer of the State of California, out of gratitude for his vigilance and integrity even though he was not a close friend of the governor's at that time. (However, Mr. Button would not have been appointed treasurer had he not had excellent qualifications for this position.) Mr. Button took his job as national committeeman seriously and did the honorable thing.

It is traditional for any governor to have control of his own party in his own state--

Stein: What exactly had Nixon done?

Knight: Before attending the governors' conference at Lake George, New York Governor Knight and several of his colleagues met with Murray Chotiner, Dick Nixon's campaign manager, at the home of Howard Ahmanson in June, 1954, where they discussed the status of the vice president and the governor, in relation to the coming State Central Committee meeting at which time the officers were elected. The governor was to have his friends and associates as chairman and vice chairman, and the vice president would have his friends as secretary and treasurer.

Mr. Chotiner got Mr. Nixon on the phone, and they agreed that that would be satisfactory. My husband's friends said to him, "Don't you think you should have talked to Mr. Nixon?"

The governor said, "I'm going to New York in a few weeks to the National Governors' Conference, and at that time I propose to go to Washington and reconfirm this agreement with the vice president.

That was the year that the vice president addressed the governors at their conference at Lake George, New York. President Eisenhower had accepted an invitation to address the governors' conference, but was obliged to cancel that appearance because of the death of his brother's wife. And he sent Vice-President Nixon, who came and read his speech.

Knight: On the 16th of July, 1954, the governor saw Mr. Nixon at the conference; and, in the presence of two of his secretaries and Edward R. Murrow, who was very much interested in this event, reconfirmed with Mr. Nixon his agreement with him that there would be no opposition to his selection for chairman and vice chairman, as had always been the custom in California, because the majority of the members of the state committee are nominated by the members of the legislature, and if the governor doesn't have the loyalty of the legislature of his own party in the legislature and the state capitol, he is in dire danger, as an executive officer.

Mr. Nixon again confirmed the agreement, and the governor and Mr. Nixon shook hands on it.

The governor returned to Los Angeles, and the following month we were married. We were on our honeymoon when the governor received the call from A. Ronald Button, in which he said, "I regret to inform you, you have been betrayed, and you are going to be the laughing stock of the nation, because you won't have your own state chairman and vice chairman, because during recent weeks Mr. Nixon's Murray Chotiner and his friends have gone about the state, and they've represented to more than a majority of the members of the state committee that you're perfectly satisfied with Ray Arbutnot, Mr. Nixon's candidate for vice chairman! And they have secured from these members, proxies. (Senator William Knowland came to Sacramento from Washington, and upheld Governor Knight's position, and was the floor leader in the battle.) Nixon later said that his people had "become too enthusiastic in California in his behalf"--totally unconvincing among the pros.*

Then I saw our beautiful home for the first time. He carried me over the threshold three times! First for the photographers, then for the television cameras, and finally, the traditional one for me.

The next morning we attended the Republican Central Committee breakfast with the delegates in attendance. We were given a standing ovation. As we were walking down the aisle toward the head table, I saw Howard Ahmanson standing at the side. I stopped for a moment and gave him a little peck on the cheek. That was to tell everyone that I knew what had happened--all the intrigue. It was interesting and exciting, Senator Knowland, Senator Thomas Kuchel and George Murphy (before he became a senator) were there, and we had our picture taken together. Everyone was very nice to us. That was quite a beginning for a bride of five days!

*Mrs. Knight noted that The Facts About Nixon by William Costello confirms these facts. (Viking Press, New York, pp. 272-273.)

Stein: You certainly received your infant baptism in politics there.

Knight: Oh, yes! But I really enjoy politics. Politics and people go together, and you have to really genuinely like people or you have no business in politics. People can tell and they can feel if one is sincere. My husband was warm and genuine. The word is not new anymore, but this word "charisma," Goodwin Knight had it in abundance. We both loved people and politics so we were a good team.

Stein: [This was Sarah Sharp's question which is on page 51 of the original transcription. Because of the sequence of events, and my additions, I felt that it would tie in better at this point. VCK]

So after you became the governor's wife, did you continue as a Republican woman?

Knight: As the governor's wife my calendar was too full to actively engage in individual Republican meetings. I always accompanied the governor wherever he went. Among those things, of course, were many Republican luncheons and dinners--and so many other activities and responsibilities which occupied our busy lives!

III GOODWIN KNIGHT'S YEARS BEFORE BECOMING GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA

[Date of Interview: October 11, 1978]##

Sharp: I want to start with the pre-governor years and ask you to tell us a little bit of what you know about them. Did he ever talk to you about the years when he was lieutenant governor and how he felt about being lieutenant governor?

Knight: He enjoyed his role as lieutenant governor and working with the legislature very much. During that time he always had the dream of being governor, as he had since he was a student at Stanford. He didn't anticipate that his chance would be when Governor Warren was elevated to the Supreme Court as the chief justice. But that was a wonderful happening and the fulfillment of a dream. He was very, very pleased about that, naturally.

Sharp: Did he enjoy being lieutenant governor more than he enjoyed being a judge on the superior court in Los Angeles?

Knight: He enjoyed being a judge and his distinguished career as a jurist is a matter of record. However, he was so energetic that being lieutenant governor was more stimulating for him personally.

Sharp: Because of the kind of work that he was doing, or the people whom he was working with?

Knight: It was the work and the people. People are people; however, there was more activity as lieutenant governor, and he was able to accomplish so much. Of course, as I have already said, he enjoyed being a judge and had an outstanding record. But he was such a vibrant, effervescent, enthusiastic, energetic person that being a judge did not afford him the opportunity for the more exciting and more fulfilling experience that being lieutenant governor offered him the opportunity to have. Then, too, he had his dream, and that was a good step toward being governor.

Sharp: Did he think that he could learn a lot about being governor by being lieutenant governor?

Knight: I'm sure he did. It would just stand to reason.

He was there in Sacramento where the action is and the people are, and the legislators are, and he enjoyed presiding over the senate.

Sharp: Do you know if the Republicans or any group of the Republican party ever asked Mr. Knight to run against Earl Warren?

Knight: Yes, I covered that in "The Golden Heritage of G.K." I wasn't present, naturally, and it's only from what I later learned from him and read in my preparation for writing the "Golden Heritage." But at one time, yes, there was a faction in the Republican party, the more conservative groups, who called upon him and wanted him to represent them. It was quite a sizable group of people. But he thought better of it, and then he decided not to even think about running for governor at that particular time. He was going to wait his turn.

Sharp: Out of loyalty to Mr. Warren?

Knight: It was unrealistic at that time, so he thought he would wait, although my husband was a loyal man. It just didn't suit the purpose in his life at that time to run against the incumbent governor, even though he had a lot of support and that support was flattering to him. He was very popular. But he decided against it.

IV THE 1954 CAMPAIGN FOR GOVERNOR

Sharp: Let's move on and talk about the '54 campaign. You mentioned that there was a tremendous amount of activity then when he actually ran for governor as governor. Tell us what you did during the campaign. What were your day to-day-activities as a new bride?

Knight: I remember that first wonderful day we arrived at the mansion. There were literally hundreds of congratulatory cards and wires and letters there waiting to greet us. And wedding gifts! That was the first order of business, to start the acknowledgements. And then, the campaign started right away. There were only three months until election! Those first weeks I was called upon for many interviews at the mansion. Then we started the whirlwind campaign. And I accompanied him everywhere. I had to have a lot of energy to try and keep up with Goodwin Knight!

Before we were married, I really hadn't thought about what it was going to be like. But somehow the pieces all fit together, and I took it one day at a time--one event at a time and gave it the best I had. And he was so wonderful to be with. Life always began for me when he walked into the room--and when we were in the kitchen, and I heard him whistle--and go into that little tap dance, we both knew how lucky we were.

Sharp: So even right after you were married it was business as usual, getting the campaign going. Now Mr. Knight felt that he had control of the central committee and you were on your way.

Knight: Yes. As I said before, it is traditional for the governor to be in control--not a vice president or senator. Now you know the importance of that vice chairmanship--and why there was that big struggle for it.

Sharp: It seems incredible to have had so much to do all at once!

Knight: Yes, then to see our lovely home for the first time. It looked like a palace--with it's beautiful chandeliers glowing brightly. And meeting my nice secretary (I had never had a secretary before.) I



Sacramento

11 1954

A NEW STAR IS BORN

the national scene, last week's exciting election produced an uncommonly large proportion of close contests—nip and tuck down to the wire.

Against that background, the smashing landslide victory of California's Governor Goodwin J. Knight stood out like a bright light in the muddled political firmament.

The GOP had reason to take high heart at one of the most tributes ever offered one of its sons by the people of the state. Goodwin Knight, Republican, carried his campaign to an electorate in which registered Democrats outnumbered registered Republicans by a margin of 851,000. Yet a majority swept upward by the hundreds of thousands in contests in other States were hanging in the balance the night.

His lines were obliterated in a wave of voter enthusiasm, Governor Knight reached a new milestone in a career of success by leading the GOP State ticket home to office. Indeed he won office by a greater margin than was any Republican candidate, for Governor or Senator, in his State!

It is interesting now to recall that Goodwin Knight's growth in stature was a matter of wide comment among political leaders when, at the annual Governors' conference, the consensus rated him outstanding among the Governors of either party.

Among fellow Californians, from seasoned political observer to the street, the meteoric rise of Goodwin Knight to the place as First Citizen comes as a natural part of the sequence of events.

Now, on the stage of national respect and esteem, he is a new star.

San Francisco Chronicle Oct 25, 1955 POST REPORT...

Governor Knight

Is he nearer the White House than Nixon, Knowland, or Warren?

He started running for Governor when he was 18. 38 years later he got the job. Now he's the Nation's No. 1 speechmaker, delivering up to two dozen addresses a day—mostly to young people on how to run for high political office.

Millions of Americans will be read-

Knight: remember thinking that first day, My goodness! How am I ever going to run this huge home! But I wasn't worried somehow. I was too happy to even think about being worried. And it all worked out just fine.

We were planning to attend the annual Santa Barbara Fiesta in a few days. It is traditional in Santa Barbara to have their three-day fiesta in August when there is a full moon. The governor had his smart Spanish costume and I had two beautiful fiesta costumes. We were ready! We flew to Santa Barbara. This was my first official performance as the wife of the governor. I called it "performance." I didn't mean it to sound so theatrical. This is a delightful event each year. I remember how dashing, distinguished and handsome the governor looked as he stood on the mission steps in his Spaniard suit and don hat. I can still hear his resonant voice giving his speech in Spanish. Oh, how everyone loved that!

It was the first time that I had met Chief Justice and Mrs. Earl Warren. They were very gracious. They, too, loved the governor's mansion--as we were already loving it.

We returned to Sacramento; and then, the busy campaign for governor started. Three months later, November 2, 1954, three months to the day that we were married, we had the good news and good fortune that he won by the largest vote of any Republican or Democrat in the United States. And, that year, as the clippings and news stories record, Republican governors and Republican senators were losing. I can talk easily about the things I remember so well and this was a wonderful memory--and an outstanding tribute to Governor Goodwin Knight of California. I am touched as I remember seeing and feeling his happiness as well as my own.

Headlines and stories the next day, and for days later, talked about this new star on the national political horizon.

So finally, Goodwin Knight had achieved his dream of so many, many years before. He had been elevated to the governorship when Earl Warren went to Washington as the chief justice. This time he was governor on his own! And with a fantastic vote! He was somebody to be reckoned with. The voters appreciated him. They appreciated Goodwin Jess Knight as their governor. On November 2, 1954, he definitely was the newest star on the Republican horizon.

In addition to his good political fortune, he had personal good fortune too. He had a happy family life, and was blessed with two beautiful daughters who were a political asset. Governor Warren had a fine and attractive family, too, but the lovely Knight girls, and a darling granddaughter, April, were definitely an asset to the governor.

- Sharp: He must have felt (and you must have felt as well) very hopeful about this new term.
- Knight: Yes, he was very hopeful--and dedicated. He had everything going for him. He was happy, he was healthy, he was popular, he was knowledgeable, and he was worthy. Those were wonderful, happy, fulfilling days for us.
- Sharp: You mentioned before that the political public relations firm of Clem Whitaker and Leone Baxter helped you very much during the campaign. You said that they were your friends as well as people who had you as clients.
- Knight: That's right. They were brilliant. Because they were our friends they were comfortable to be with; we saw them socially. We visited them at their lovely home in Marin County and they came to the mansion and we talked politics and, yes, they were our friends.
- Sharp: Did they talk politics with you when they came over during these social evenings?
- Knight: Yes, it was mostly politics; that was the main topic because time was very precious.
- Sharp: Did you enjoy listening to all that you heard?
- Knight: Yes! I loved every minute of it. I thrived on it because I could see my husband was so happy. It was exciting to be a part of it all--to be a part of history. One of the reasons I loved living in the mansion was because (the area where it was located wasn't fancy, but what did that matter?)--once inside the mansion to feel its history was thrilling for us. We thought of all the other governors and their wives who had lived there before us--Hiram Johnson (whom my husband admired so much--Johnson and Theodore Roosevelt were his kind of Republicans), and all the decisions, the happiness and the heartaches. It was an honor and a privilege and a joy to be a part of all of this. We were so happy there--our first home together.
- Sharp: Now that he had won as governor, he must have felt that he really represented the Republican party in California, especially groups like the California Republican Assembly. Did you have the sense that these groups saw Mr. Knight as their representative, and that Mr. Knight saw himself as their representative?
- Knight: Yes, by all means. Definitely. There was no reason to think otherwise with his overwhelming vote. I mean, the people had spoken, Republicans and Democrats.

Inaugural Ceremony

January 3rd, 1955



Legislative Chambers

Sacramento, California

Inaugural Ceremony

JOINT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

January 3, 1955

Legislative Chambers

Sacramento



Sharp: There was some rumor of campaign finance problems in 1954. When Whitaker and Baxter came over for the evening, did they talk about problems, day-to-day problems, of running the campaign?

Knight: I'm sure they did. I don't remember anything specific at that time. Campaign financing is always a problem, but I don't recall that it was a problem then because Goodwin Knight was popular and everything was going for him. People were anxious to get on the Knight team at that time. He was a winner. There wasn't a Mayor George Christopher standing in the wings, and Senator Bill Knowland wasn't breathing down our necks!

We weren't pacing the floor of the governor's mansion then. That came later, in 1957 and 1958.

We were just so busy doing our work, our job. We were out meeting the people at the various events, luncheons and dinners. He was busy as the capitol meeting with the legislators, and I was busy at the mansion responding to the many letters that came to me. And the responses to the bouquets of roses that greeted us when we arrived at the airports from thoughtful friends.

Sharp: You have mentioned that phrase "meeting the people" over and over. That must really be foremost in your mind as the essence of what the campaign was meant to be--that it was touching and seeing and hearing every single person that you met.

Knight: Yes! Sarah, you have caught the real essence, as you say, of the way we felt. If only we could just talk to every single person. We did get that feeling when we went to shopping centers. I would be at his side and he'd be talking and asking the people questions, and wanting to hear their questions, and I would give out the literature I'm giving you for souvenirs today. If only we could have talked and shook hands and "touched" everyone. But California is a big state. We tried. I am thrilled and honored to have had this happen to me in my lifetime.

Sharp: From what you are telling me, I can really catch the enthusiasm of the campaign.

Knight: This is only part of it, Sarah. When he walked into a room his strong presence was felt. He was alive! In years to come, those who may be reading this might say, "She's prejudiced." But I am not alone. The many accolades and testimonials and stories that were written about my late husband show that he had a special warmth and engaging personality.

Sharp: It certainly seems so.

V ISSUES DURING KNIGHT'S GOVERNORSHIP

Sharp: Let's talk a little bit about the period after the campaign and after he was already in office on his own. Can you tell us how his stance on the right-to-work issue developed?

Knight: He was realistic. It had been on the ballot before in California and had been resoundingly defeated by the voters as early as 1944. My husband knew that if the Republican party went against labor, the working people, it would lose. He knew that when Senator Knowland, later, in 1957, injected that issue into his anticipated campaign for governor that it would be, quoting the governor, "A blueprint for disaster!" I can still hear his voice ringing in speech after speech: "Don't do this, Republicans! It's a blueprint for disaster!"

Knowland (the only reason that he could get into this race) had to make that his issue because what other issue could there have been between Knight and Knowland in a Republican primary campaign? Knowland could not go up and down the state of California and say that Knight had not been a good governor--because he had been a good governor, and he had earned the right to finish his job. Isn't that the American way--the American dream?

Senator Knowland, for that matter, could not have been a better governor than Governor Knight who had been on the scene for years in Sacramento--knew every legislator by his first name--while Knowland had been back in Washington. What did he know about highways and traffic safety? Alcoholic beverage control, our senior citizens, and their problems, child welfare, agriculture, conservation of oil and gas, labor--unemployment, workmen's compensation insurance, taxes, veterans' home loans, mental hygiene, state employees, narcotics, air pollution, the acquisition of San Simeon for California, the budget, the water program, and a thousand other responsibilities for a state the size of California?

Knight: Knight and Knowland had opposite points of view on that controversial issue. However, every constitutional officer had the same stand on right-to-work as the governor, and stayed away from Knowland in their individual campaigns! Knowland was the only one out in left field, as the saying goes. As you know, and history has recorded, the ballot box proved that it was a blueprint for disaster for the Republicans. What the governor had predicted came true.

Sharp: He felt very strongly about labor and labor's position.

Knight: He was realistic about the importance of labor's support, but he still had his conservative principles. He wasn't taken over by labor. He was fair. He never signed one bill that wasn't fair. He was concerned about the working men and women--that they should have fair wages.

Look at all of the Republican leaders and their position on that issue. They were all in agreement with the governor: President Eisenhower, Vice-President Nixon, and even Mayor Christopher. Knowland put that issue around the necks and on the backs of the Republicans that year--and we all know what happened. He took a chance, gambled, and lost. Lost by a million votes. He took a chance, hoping that by defeating the popular incumbent Governor Knight that he, indeed, would be a big man--bigger than he was then, and would have a chance at the presidency--in competition with Dick Nixon.

However, Nixon was too smart for that kind of thinking. He knew if Knowland espoused right-to-work--went against labor--that he could never win the final election in California. Nixon watched the scenario unfold--and was the benefactor. Another one watching the fiasco was Pat Brown--enjoying every minute of the Knight-Knowland collision! With a squabbling Republican party, he was waiting in the wings for his chance on center stage.

It's very sad that so many good Republican officeholders lost--they were good men. And it never should have happened. (That was the beginning of a very sad and tragic life for Senator William Knowland. Years later, Goodwin and I felt sad and really sorry for him.)

Let me tell you an interesting story: preceding the 1956 Republican convention, President Eisenhower was in San Francisco to attend the tenth anniversary of the signing of the United Nations. It was on July 24, 1955. Here is a photograph of the governor giving the welcome speech, and seated behind him is President Eisenhower, and there is Vyacheslav Molotov from Russia. At the dinner that evening, I sat directly across from Mr. Molotov. A lovely compliment came to me later from Ambassador and Mrs. (Emily) Henry Cabot Lodge, "You should be our ambassador to Russia!" Nice moments to remember.

Knight: At a reception earlier in the evening at the St. Francis Hotel, the governor told the president that there was some speculation that the Republicans wanted to put a right-to-work bill on the ballot in 1956. The president said, "For heaven's sake, Governor, you've got to stop that! We can't let that happen!"

When Eisenhower was going to be a candidate for re-election in 1956 he did not want that controversial issue around his neck! I was present and I heard that conversation; "We've got to stop that! Don't let them put the right-to-work on for us!" Yet, two years later that same issue was put on my husband's back because of unrealistic Republicans.

For a lighter touch, at that time I gave President Eisenhower a copy of a little poem I had written for him entitled: "The President Smiled at Me." I wrote it after he saw me in the audience at a dinner in Washington when he smiled at me and waved his hand. It was a short poem, and he asked me to recite it to him. Although I had it in my hand, I knew it by heart and so I whispered it in his ear. You can imagine the speculation, "What was Mrs. Knight telling the president?"

Sharp: There were lots of other issues that your husband had to face while he was governor besides coming to grips with the right-to-work head on. For instance, highway construction and the water plan. Did he talk to you about these issues?

Knight: Naturally. During the water plan controversy there was the conflict between the north and the south. It is all a matter of record and of history. I am very proud of the fruition of the water project. My television man, D.W. Alleeson, was here yesterday. He had taken his children to the Perris Dam, and he was pleased to tell them that he knew Governor Knight, and that the governor had a "very important part in the water program in California."

I remember that day when Governor Knight put forth the first spadeful of dirt at Oroville Dam, June 1, 1957. Here is a copy of a letter which I wrote (representing my late husband) for the dedication ceremonies at Lake Perris on Friday, May 18, 1973, celebrating the completion of the California Water Project.

In a letter to me from Irwin E. Farrar on September 25, 1975 (representing The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California), who was appointed by the State to act as Dedication Ceremonies Chairman of the Completion of the State Water Project, he wrote: "Governor Knight started the California State Water Project on its way at Oroville and by recommending and securing passage of the legislation that formed the State Department of Water Resources under whose guidance the great project was built and is now being operated by that Department."

VI THE 1956 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

Sharp: Let's talk about 1956. This was a pretty incredible year for California because we had the Republican National Convention in San Francisco. As governor, Mr. Knight had a tremendous role to play in seeing that everything went smoothly at that convention and getting the right people in the top positions. What was your role as the governor's wife at this convention?

Knight: Mainly, at a convention like that, the wife of the governor is the hostess to greet the people attending the convention. Give interviews to the press--attend luncheons, attend the ceremonies--and receptions with the governor. Preceding the convention, I wrote a letter to all the wives of the governors, senators, and cabinet members--to Mrs. Eisenhower and Mrs. Nixon. I told them about San Francisco's weather and the events that were planned so they could bring the appropriate clothes.

Mayor and Mrs. Christopher had a nice party and we had ours the next evening--held at the Civic Auditorium--because our party was so big! It was a most successful party. Each lady received a gardenia corsage. Champagne was served. The Nixons, the Knights, and the Christophers stood together to greet and shake hands with all the guests. The stories in the press the next day were most complimentary--saying, "Knight's party out-Mestas Pearl Mesta!" She was the famous Washington hostess and party giver.

The first day I had to meet with women of the press in our Palace Hotel suite. They asked questions about what I was going to wear to which event and things like that. Let's see, how long ago was that? Twenty-two years ago; it's very much the same as it is today. Women are curious about what the women are going to wear--and the men have all sorts of important things on their minds. There was an opening breakfast briefing where I introduced the governors' wives.

Knight: And there was the question of the vice-presidential nomination. There was some discussion that maybe Mr. Nixon would not be the choice of all of the Republicans. There was a faction that did not want Mr. Nixon. It was not headed by my husband, believe me. He was a popular governor with terrific vote-getting appeal, and two years before he had won by the largest vote of any other Republican in the United States, and there were those who were thinking of him for vice president. In public opinion polls he was one of those mentioned as a possible contender for the vice presidency and, yes, there were even some little buttons that enthusiastic supporters had designed and had made up on their own.

Sharp: That said Ike and Goodie?

Knight: Yes, but I emphasize--the governor had nothing to do with it. You must remember that he was colorful--charming and capable and a good governor. He had very enthusiastic friends supporting him who dearly loved him. Two very strong supporters come to my mind here, Mary and Douglas Tibbetts who owned a newspaper in Woodland. Their enthusiasm, especially Mary, who was a delegate, could not be suppressed! And there were many others. You can't suppress enthusiasm like that.

Sharp: The enthusiasm that is most remarkable to me is shown in hundreds of letters that I saw in Mr. Knight's files at Stanford literally begging him to run for vice president, fearful that Mr. Nixon would be the vice president again and perhaps even president. The letters showed such great support.

Knight: Yes, it's true.

Sharp: Did that add fuel to your husband's thinking about running for vice president?

Knight: Well, he was pleased, naturally. He believed in having a free, open delegation rather than just having everything all cut and dried. At a luncheon in my honor which was given by the Women's National Republican Club, I was interrogated by the press. The New York Herald Tribune, Friday, October 21, 1955, published a story with the headline, "Wife of Governor Knight Says he Favors Free Delegation."

"Mrs. Goodwin J. Knight, vivacious wife of California's governor, said here yesterday that her husband hopes to head a 'free, open delegation to the Republican National Convention next year in San Francisco. Only by being 'free,' she said, would the delegation be able to select the 'strongest candidate,' 'and there are many strong men,' Mrs. Knight added."

Sharp: That's what the convention was for.

Knight: That's right. But he didn't hire a campaign committee and all that. It was absolutely an exciting, spontaneous thing. Some campaign buttons were circulated: Goodie for V.P., Goodie for California. It was a heartfelt spontaneous thing, and it could have been a good thing because my husband certainly had the qualifications to be vice president or even president. His background was unblemished. He was well qualified in every avenue of his talent, in every area of his ability.

Top below: The Executive Mansion at Sacramento. Right: Mrs. Knight supervises preparations for the luncheon with the executive housekeeper, Mrs. Ellen Leagren, whose salary is paid by Governor and Mrs. Knight. Second row left: Publisher Harry Nasburg of THE ARGONAUT, and Mrs. Nasburg register with Mrs. Knight as they arrive. Right: Mrs. Knight shows wedding pictures to (L to R) Mrs. Stanley T. Wilson and Mr. Wilson of Turlock Daily Journal; Mrs. Craig Hawley and Mr. Hawley, of Modesto Tribune.



PACIFICA
Focus



By V. M. HANKS JR.

A Day with Knight

THE author of the poem on the following page is one of the most charming and certainly one of the prettiest "first ladies" of the 48 states. She is Mrs. Goodwin J. Knight, wife of California's distinguished governor. Both are just about the two busiest people in the state. At the time these pictures were taken, Governor Knight was in the midst of "the roughest legislative session I have ever had." Virginia Knight is no less busy with the multitude of duties concerned with the supervision of the executive mansion, public appearances, entertaining (formally and otherwise) and hundreds of other details that make up the life of one of her station.

But Governor and Mrs. Knight actually practice what the moral of her poem implies, and this was demonstrated recently when in spite of the intense pressures upon them they entertained editors and publishers at the annual Open House of the Executive Mansion in Sacramento. It is a yearly practice of Governor Knight to designate five dates in May and June when all weekly publishers of the state are invited to attend one of the regular press conferences, tour the Executive Mansion and have lunch with him and Mrs. Knight. The luncheons are paid for out of the governor's personal funds rather than at state expense—and the visitors are given a personal glimpse into the lives of California's leading citizens.

For example, Mrs. Knight personally conducts them on a tour of the 80-year-old three-story mansion and the outside grounds and carriage house, which now serves as a garage. She shows them her wedding pictures, an-

Third row left: Mrs. Knight shows her ARGONAUT cover photo to (L to R) Mrs. Ross L. Hanchett, Clear Lake Observer-American; M. F. McMillen, Santa Rosa Herald and Mrs. Patricia Tellefsen. Lower left: Tour of cupola. (L-R) Mrs. Paul Caswell, Selinas; Miss Kovner; Mrs. Joseph E. Kovner, East Side Sun, Los Angeles; Mrs. Knight. Center: Mrs. Alan P. Tory; Mrs. Knight; the Rev. Francis L. Merkey, Central California Register, Fresno; Alan P. Tory, S. F. City and County Record and Fortnight. Right: Mrs. Seldon Menefee, Seldon Menefee, Fair Oaks San Juan Record; M. E. Lott (back to camera), Paradise Lost.



swers questions, graciously reveals the many-faceted life she and the governor lead.

Needless to say, the Open House has proved to be an extremely popular event with the publishers because of the opportunity to sit in firsthand on the making of news at the press conferences and to meet Governor and Mrs. Knight and chat informally about questions of the day.

The pictures on these pages share one of these days with the readers of THE ARGONAUT, whose publisher, along with his wife, was one of the guests.

LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

Life is what you make it,
Abundant and complete . . .
It is all within yourself,
Victory or defeat.

Life is full of sunshine
If you will let it in . . .
But, remember, to be happy
You must start within.

Open up your heart,
And let the sunshine in . . .
Face each problem squarely,
For that's the way to win.

Spread joy and cheer to others.
And you'll have friends galore . . .
You'll be living a full life,
Could you ask for more?

Instead of finding fault,
Look for the good instead . . .
Lend help to those less fortunate,
And you will get ahead.

Do not frown so readily,
And smile a little more . . .
And you'll find you are happier
Than you ever were before.

Go out of your way
To help a friend in need . . .
In the long run, it will pay
For a brighter life you'll lead.

Do not act so bored.
So restless, so blasé.
Eagerly look forward
To the dawn of each new day!

Life is what you make it,
Abundant and complete . . .
How deep the victory in yourself!
How shallow the defeat . . .

—Virginia Knight



Left: After lunch Mrs. Knight conducts a tour of the grounds, as, below, Governor Knight signs a bill in his study.



Above and right: The guests leave, and Mrs. Knight turns to her regular duties: writing letters and filing press clippings.



Left: A goodbye kiss sends the governor back to his legislative duties—and Virginia Knight waves an airy farewell to the readers of THE ARGONAUT.



VII OTHER CONFLICTS WITH RICHARD NIXON

Sharp: Let's talk about Mr. Nixon for a moment. Why did Mr. Knight oppose Mr. Nixon so much?

Knight: Well, he didn't oppose him at the beginning of their friendship many, many years ago.

Sharp: What turned the tide then?

Knight: Newspaper stories show that when Mr. Nixon ran for Congress (my husband had received both nominations for lieutenant governor with an overwhelming popular vote), Lieutenant-Governor Knight made speeches for Nixon, an unknown. Incidentally, when Congressman Nixon later was selected by the Republicans to run for the U.S. Senate, there were many supporters who thought the popular lieutenant governor would have been a better candidate for the Senate. But Goodwin Knight did not want to run for the Senate then--any more than he did in 1958. He wanted to be governor.

Why did so many people turn against Mr. Nixon through the years? It was an inherent feeling. My husband didn't label the name Tricky Dick on him. It was a series of events--of happenings to many people through the years that gave him that name. One of those people was Goodwin Knight. That is why they were acquaintances and not friends, even to the point of becoming political foes.

In my first introduction to Mr. Nixon, via his interruption of our honeymoon, my husband had not talked against him. Later, I recall my husband telling me that one time when Mr. Nixon came to California when he was Senator, Lieutenant-Governor Knight, in his official capacity, was at the airport to greet him. Protocol. The Nixon men, Murray Chotiner, etc., elbowed the lieutenant governor out so that he would not be in the pictures. That was the beginning of an intended slight. My husband was big enough to overlook that, but he remembered it as time went on and there were other slights and other--well, they could be termed "double-crosses."

Sharp: In 1955 Governor Knight wrote to a Mr. Leslie Baker that he might even have favorite-son status if Mr. Eisenhower decided not to run for re-election in 1956.

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Knight: That is not unrealistic. As the governor of California, he had lots of prestige. Any good governor of a state this size is automatically mentioned as presidential timber, to quote the title of the article he wrote when he was a student at Stanford. The attributes and qualities he wrote about then for one to possess in order to be president were the same qualities one should possess to be governor. He had those outstanding qualifications, for that matter, so there was no reason for him to think that he was not presidential timber, when he saw some of the other (I don't mean to be facetious) talent, as it were. He was just as good as anybody else who had been mentioned.

The telephone would ring constantly! It was exciting! It might be a possibility. He was one of ten mentioned in a presidential poll that was taken by Colliers magazine. He had national stature. Here is a quotation in this connotation, from Theodore H. White, who wrote an article for Colliers magazine, February 3, 1956 (with Governor Knight's picture on the cover). The article is entitled, "Nixon...Knowland...Knight...Warren--Any One of Them Could Become President."

Paraphrasing Mr. White: Goodwin J. Knight is "one of the most instantaneously charming men in American public life today. Politics has fascinated him all his life and he has found in it delight, joy and intellectual sustenance...a demanding, intricate, skilled occupation. The governor's library is that of a man preoccupied with the principles and mechanics of politics at every level... A scholar of American politics in its deepest sense, he has shrewdly protected himself from the epithet of egghead by a wondrous platform collection of jokes and anecdotes.

"Beginning political activity in school and working up through the ranks, Goodwin Knight earned his governorship of California the hard way. He held his leadership of the largest Republican state in the union in 1954, and moved into the front rank of contenders for national office. This position, however, depends on an open convention, ability to control California's 70 delegates over the intense enmity of the Nixon forces and the ambitions of Senator Knowland."

I feel this is an appropriate time to add something here in connection with Governor Knight's appeal--not only to friends and supporters who knew him personally, but to strangers, as well. During a visit to New York in April, 1956, Bessie R. James, author of "Wit and Wisdom of Adlai Stevenson," wrote a letter to Walter E. Bruns,

Knight: vice president of the Bank of America in San Francisco. He, in turn, sent a copy of the letter to my husband's executive secretary, Newton Stearns. Written on April 16, 1957, the letter reads: "Governor Knight has been in N.Y. for a week or more and has made a wonderful impression. I've heard him on the radio a couple of times. His talks were as refreshing as the fog that blows into S.F. from the sea."

I think it is appropriate to add another quote here. It is from President Eisenhower. This was quoted in Time magazine, May 30, 1955. After hearing Governor Knight speak at a rally at the Hollywood Bowl the president said, "I feel like the bat boy going in after Babe Ruth!"

Another very complimentary comment is from his successor, Pat Brown. Former Governor Brown sent Governor Knight a copy of a letter that Governor Brown had written on February 3, 1970:

"May I suggest the title of Campaigning and Politics Can Be Fun. You had better get some ideas from Goodie, however, because he is the master and I am only a student."

Anyway, President Eisenhower and Vice-President Nixon were renominated. And my husband was called upon by the Republican National Committee to campaign for Ike and Dick, which he did willingly, enthusiastically, and vigorously!

We flew to West Virginia, St. Petersburg, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, New Jersey. Goodwin went all out for the team. We both were interviewed wherever we went, and our scrapbook is filled with most complimentary stories about our visits to these places. In fact, speaking of my campaigning, here's a headline in the St. Petersburg Times, October 9, 1956: "Mrs. Knight Does Bit of GOP Charming on Her Own." And I couldn't have received a nicer birthday present than this in Beckley, West Virginia: "Goodie's Spouse Captivates Crowd."

I am telling this not to sing my praises, but to show the all-out effort we both gave to the campaign for Ike and Dick.

The Abdication of Sir Knight

Not since King Edward gave up his throne for Wally Simpson has the world seen the like of what is now taking place in California.

Sir Goodwin Knight has abdicated his governor's chair, and theoretically at least, has put it under Sir William Knowland's austere person.

Never before has an incumbent Governor, as strongly entrenched and as popular as Knight, been literally forced out of office by a sinister and odoriferous act of his own Republican party.

Senator William Knowland, part and parcel of an inept and blundering big businessman's administration which has allowed the Soviet Union to assume world leadership in pure scientific research practically by default (after all, how can you allow the U.S. to spend money on launching of satellites when handouts and loans to big corporations come first). Senator William Knowland, practically a stranger in California, decided he wants to be president of the land he loves.

So the prodigal son returns.

And he decides to run against Knight for the governorship of the Golden State. Don't you see, if you want to be president, you first must be governor. The odds are with you, that way.

Knight had presidential aspirations too. When I accepted his gracious invitation to Sacramento, at his mansion he even played the piano. Believe me, he acted like presidential timber. And he was in an excellent vantage point. He was governor of California . . . and electable. That could be a springboard to the Republican presidential nomination in 1960.

But Knowland wanted what Knight had.

And in his public utterances, Knowland hedged and parried and equivocated, and dodged and weaved, and ducked, and used sophistry, rationalization, inverse logic to explain why he was not going to run for Senator in 1958.

When he was asked if his entry into the 1958 GOP gubernatorial nomination race was a stepping stone to the presidency, honest, sincere, true-blue Bill, filled with integrity, red-white and blue Bill, went out of character and tried to smile (you know, the sun shines over the Rock of Gibraltar stuff, a good public relations man was surely guiding him) and he said: "I intend to serve my term as Governor of California and probably, ~~run again. But I don't have a crystal ball etc. etc.~~

This is what startles me and a great many down-to-earth Democrats.

Does Bill have a crystal ball?

Is it at the end of an iron chain and has he bludgeoned out all opposition in his path by using the threat of no financial backing as the spikes on his crystal ball?

Can the Republican party remove a governor from office before the people have even voted for him?

Brooklyn Belvedere Comet
Los Angeles, California
November 7, 1957

VIII THE "BIG SWITCH" AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR UNITED STATES SENATOR,
1957-1958

Sharp: Let's now talk about 1958 and the big switch. How did you feel about that when it happened?

Knight: Naturally, I was disappointed for my husband. I was disappointed for me, too; not that that was important. He was a good governor. He had an excellent record. Balanced the budget every year with no increase in taxes. A wonderful record of achievements. I knew that I had done a good job, too, as the governor's wife. We really enjoyed our work--our life. We were dependable and responsible about this great trust that was given to us. We did our job well. There were no complaints. Thousands of complimentary letters to us are a testimonial to that. We were good-will ambassadors for California.

We did many novel and innovative things at the mansion. We opened it to the public for the first time at our annual open house, the first Sunday after New Year's. Thousands came to see our home and us. They loved it. It was a tremendous success. We started the legislative dinners which later became traditional, with the Browns and the Reagans continuing them. We also had a succession of publishers' luncheons and press cocktail parties. We loved every minute of our active life, and we loved living in the mansion. We took our job, and that's what it was--we took it very seriously. But it wasn't so important how I felt, but I knew that we had been successful in a job that we both dearly loved.

(By the way, Senator Knowland came for lunch one day.)

In 1957, Sacramento's annual State Fair time arrived. It is a delightful time in Sacramento--warm, but delightful. We looked forward to the traditional opening-day festivities when we would arrive early in the morning and have our picture taken at each exhibit of every county. Then we opened the fair and crowned the beautiful queen, the Maid of California.

Knight: During the State Fair there is a tradition for civic and business leaders throughout California to have what is called the No Host Breakfast. This year it was held on September 2, 1957. And Senator William F. (Bill) Knowland used that forum to announce that he was not going to run again for the United States Senate!

The governor had announced for re-election on August 19, 1957. He announced ahead of the time that he ordinarily would have. It was his way of saying, regardless of what you're going to do, Bill Knowland, I'm going to run again for governor. It's my job. I have done a good job--I have earned the right to finish that job. That is how he felt, and that is what he did.

Then, oh! The activity, the speculation and the questions! When Knowland announced his candidacy, and injected the right-to-work issue into the campaign, the Republicans were divided. If all the people could have voted, Democrats and Republicans, and not just Republicans, the governor would have stayed in the race against Knowland--and he would have won. Many of the big money Republicans backed Knowland. You spoke earlier about "campaign funds drying up." Now, they really were. Now we felt the pinch. When you don't have adequate funds to buy billboards and television time, you cannot run a good campaign. A fight between these two giants, Governor Knight and Senator Knowland, with that controversial right-to-work issue on the ballot in a Republican primary, would be catastrophic. Reluctantly, he sadly realized that he had to run for Senate.

After that heartbreaking, disastrous defeat for the Senate (his first), wherever we would go people would come up and say, "Why didn't you stay in the race for governor? You could have won. We would have sent in our dimes and quarters." To this day people still say this to me. But you can't win a campaign that way--with only Republicans to vote and with That issue. It was heartwarming for us that Democrats started a campaign of wanting to change their registration to become "A Republican for a Day," so they could vote for Knight. But that, too, was a Herculean task.

When Mr. Nixon was injected into the campaign we wondered what his role might be. Clint Mosher, political editor for the San Francisco Examiner, was a good friend of the governor's and also of the vice president. He was torn because he liked them both. He was the ideal man to ask what position he would take in the California campaign if Knight stayed in the race for re-election. The word came back to us on a rainy night.

I'll never forget it. I can still see Clint in his trench coat. Officer Charles Penny brought him to the side entrance of the mansion where we greeted him. The three of us sat in the living room (where many other important decisions had taken place throughout the mansion's history.) Clint said, "Governor, there's no way. If you stay in the race for governor, Dick Nixon will campaign in every county against you." [pause]

Knight: After he left, we talked for a long time. For weeks he debated in his heart: What was the best thing for him to do? Those were the long nights he paced the floor of the governor's mansion. It was such an unhappy time for us.

We slipped away to Phoenix, Arizona, to avoid the turmoil on our way to Washington. We were there for several days. It was supposed to be a vacation. We were both unhappy, naturally, about the turn of events. He had not told the press, yet, what he was going to do. It was still nebulous in his mind and heart. He didn't want to run for the Senate--and here we were on our way to Washington.

We arrived in Washington in the early morning and the reporters were there! The questions!

Well, the next day was the big day--where the big announcement was to take place on the White House steps with the 'blessing' of President Eisenhower and Vice-President Nixon. (The emptiness of it all...)

We immediately left for Puerto Rico for what we tried to make a short vacation. He was wonderful. Of course he was disappointed--we both were. But he didn't mope around in a blue bathrobe! We swam, and we met new friends, and we had a pleasant time. We tried to forget politics for a little while.

When we arrived back in San Francisco (he dedicated that airport in 1954) it was raining. It seemed like California was weeping with us and for us (like our last night in Sacramento). Hundreds of wonderful, loyal friends were there waiting for us in the rain to greet, cheer, and welcome us home. The band was playing "California Here I Come!" They were holding big placards: "Knight for Senator!" "We Like Most Everybody--But We Love Goodie and Virginia!" It was tender, heartwarming, and heartbreaking.

Sharp: Was Mr. Knight's mind made up before he went to Washington?

Knight: Yes. He knew. He knew before he went to Washington. But we were still hoping against hope that something might change to turn it all around. As I have already said, there was no money to mount a good campaign. Knowland was there entrenched with the right-to-work bill which was a Republican issue, and the vice president was going to campaign against the incumbent governor for Knowland.

Sharp: Did he ever really feel that he didn't even really want to run for Senator?

Knight: Yes, because he didn't have the heart for the Senate race, and no, because he loved politics and he didn't want to leave the profession he dearly loved. There were all sorts of dedicated friends and supporters who knew and appreciated his worth, who said, "You've got to do something! You can't let this happen! Become a Democrat. Run as an independent." (If this were to happen, an overwhelming number of voters had to register as "independent" during a given period of time. And there wasn't enough time. It was something that just couldn't be done.)

When he finally made us his mind, that was it. He gave his all. That's the way he was. He wasn't a griever. He didn't cry over spilled milk. When he was finally in that Senate race he said, "Okay, I'm running for the United States Senate. Let's go!" Then he gave it everything he had, and so did I.

Sharp: You certainly did. I was reading in the files of the '58 campaign, and that was a tight campaign. I don't know if this is going to help you at all, but this is a list of campaign contributors to the governor's campaign for Senator.

Knight: Thank you. Isn't this terrific?

Sharp: Are they people whom you knew?

Knight: Yes, some of them but not all of them. Here's Jack Haley, the movie star. How nice. The list you have given me is so long. I will have to take time and look through it. Ollie Hammond. Of course. We enjoyed delicious steak at his restaurants.

Sharp: Would they be small contributors or fairly substantial contributors?

Knight: I wouldn't know the amounts. I am sure there are all different amounts. If you give me a little time, I am sure I can determine who many of these good friends are. They were dear, loyal friends and I am grateful to them for their support.

Sharp: You can keep that.

Knight: Fine. Thank you. It's nice to see these friends on the list. Many of them I didn't know we had.

Sharp: That's a nice long list of friends for sure.

Knight: Like Leonard Firestone, he's a prominent Republican leader, and Ernest Duque. These are some of the Republican leaders who would be for Knowland, as well. Alva Baird, that dear man. He was my husband's accountant. He was a lifelong Democrat who was going to become a "Republican for a day" as so many others who were going to do! I can determine some of these names, but there are just too many--which is nice. Roy Crocker, of course, from San Francisco. How nice. Thank you for the list.

Knight: Here is a story by Clint Mosher announcing the governor's formal opening of his campaign for United States Senator. "Knight Opens Drive Here." (Tuesday, February, 1958.) My memories are stirred in remembering that glorious night at the famous Palace Hotel in San Francisco! "More than 1200 persons filled the hotel's Palm Court and the adjoining Rose Room to applaud the governor." Loving friends filled the rooms, their enthusiasm permeated the atmosphere.

Our dear friend, Jack Benny, came up for this special occasion. In a query from the press he said, "Look, I'm here because I like Goodie Knight. I don't give a darn if he's a Republican or Democrat!"

The outpouring of so much love. I shall treasure this memory always. Our devoted friend, beautiful Mary Costa, star of opera and films, made this special trip to join us. And, oh! What a surprise when she sang, "My Morning Prayer," a poem of mine that had been set to music by the famous composer, Richard Hageman. It was just all too much! And darling Carol Channing was there. There are no words to express the appreciation Goodwin and I felt for these dear friends.

Sharp: That certainly was a wonderful way for the Senate campaign to start --off to such a fulfilling beginning. The United Republican Finance Committee did say that they would give Mr. Knight \$200,000 to help him with billboards and all of that. Did that make Mr. Knight feel any better when he decided to run for U.S. Senator, that there was at least some--?

Knight: He wasn't concerned about finances then. (Of course, George Christopher was in the race.) After all, he had sacrificed so much for the Republican party (not to have a head-on collision with Knowland) why shouldn't the Republicans rally behind him?

That was the whole purpose of going to Washington and shaking hands with President Eisenhower and Vice-President Nixon. After all, okay, they seemed to say: Goodie, if you run for the Senate we will support you, but we won't support you for governor.

The governorship is what they should have supported him for-- He had earned the right to finish the job. Ridiculous! The Knowlands, settled in Washington, moving to Sacramento. The Knights, settled in Sacramento, moving to Washington! I repeat, ridiculous! Knowland could easily have been re-elected to the Senate, and so could Knight easily have been re-elected governor. This was one time the Republicans outsmarted themselves. I don't know how many times before, or since, but they really did it in '58! What became known as the "musical chairs of '58." A real debacle!

Sharp: There was quite a bit of Democratic support then for Mr. Knight in '58, wasn't there?

Knight: Oh, yes, yes.

Sharp: In fact, in the files it shows there was a whole separate committee of Democrats.

Knight: Yes. That's right, Democrats for Knight, definitely.

Sharp: There are names of people which seem to appear very often in the files for '58. Newton Stearns is one of them.

Knight: Newton Stearns was the governor's executive secretary. But during the campaign he left the governor's office and went to work for Whitaker and Baxter's public relations firm in San Francisco. We were disappointed, though, in the handling of the campaign. The support wasn't as good as it should have been.

Sharp: Do you mean from Whitaker and Baxter?

Knight: The billboard showing was terrible--not placed in good and strategic places. We saw Clair Engle's billboard. It was fantastic. I remember it so well, and how we both felt the first time we saw it. It said, referring to Engle, "He will be a strong United States Senator," implying that Knight was not strong because he left the governor's race.

Well, when everything is pulled away from you and money's pulled away from you, that doesn't make you weak as far as your character is concerned--or your ability. He just became weak monetarily. In going back to your question, yes, we were disappointed in the way the campaign was going. Even though his former executive secretary, Newton Stearns, was there--there was deep disappointment for us. He decided to change campaign managers.

Sharp: Who did he change to?

Knight: Edgar A. Waite in San Francisco, and Hazel Junkins and Robert Voight in Los Angeles. Hazel Junkins is no longer living. Bob Voight is still active in politics.

Sharp: You mentioned before that you thought that Mr. Nixon had a role in the Big Switch, and I wonder if you would just clarify exactly what you mean by that?

Knight: The circumstances surrounding it all makes it "perfectly clear." The rumor, circulated extensively, is that Nixon wanted to "get rid of both Knowland and Knight," because they, understandably, were both powerful men. Nixon thought and knew, because of that, that they were both a threat to him and his ambitions--his quest for the presidency.

Knight: What I have already told you is revealing to the authenticity of Nixon's role. The conversation we had with Clint Mosher, political editor for the San Francisco Examiner, at the executive mansion on that rainy night in Sacramento.

Sharp: Would you go over that conversation again for me?

Knight: The governor was debating and worrying and sad and unhappy about the turn of events, and he was going through every avenue of trying to determine what to do. Clint Mosher was Knight's friend and he was the logical one to talk to Nixon about what he was going to do in the forthcoming campaign between Knight and Knowland. So Clint Mosher went to Nixon and asked him, "What role are you going to play? Are you going to sit back?"

Clint came to the mansion on a Sunday night in the rain and he said that Nixon said that "if you stay in the race for governor, he'll campaign in every county against you for Knowland." I think that would be a pretty big role and a lot of responsibility for the vice president to assume. That's what happened and I was there. I remember it as though it were yesterday.

Sharp: I could imagine that wouldn't be anything that you would forget very easily. So after Knight decided that he would run for U.S. Senator and, of course, he lost, how then did the Republican party treat him after this was all over?

Knight: Fine. But there was a little saying that my husband used to relate: "I feel like I was stabbed in the back with a knife, and then arrested for carrying a concealed weapon!"

I told you earlier before we were on the tape that my husband was flexible. He had to be flexible. He could not help it that the mayor of San Francisco, George Christopher, was already in the Senate race. Knight had already announced for re-election as governor. However, because of impossible circumstances he was forced, literally, to abandon the race for governor, change his mind and announce for the Senate. Why couldn't a member of Governor Knight's party, Christopher, be as flexible as the governor? He was still a young man--and there could still be other campaigns in the future for him. Why should the mayor think his disappointment was any greater than the governor's? There was no comparison.

Hadn't the governor sacrificed enough by agreeing to run for a job that he didn't really want? Goodwin Knight was magnanimous. But Christopher tenaciously stayed in the race. Wasn't everything difficult enough? The primary campaign against Christopher made it all the more difficult. Christopher, running all over the state saying, "Knight promised me that he wasn't going to run for the Senate." Promised him?! The governor didn't promise him anything! This is the truth. I was there. He acted as though the governor crossed his heart and raised his right hand and said, "No, George, I promise you I amnot going to run for the Senate." Ridiculous!

Knight: I remember the brief conversation very well. It was at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco the evening of August 20, 1957. The governor was presented "The Italian Star of Solidarity." I wore a turquoise chiffon dress and a charming young Italian lady presented me with some lovely roses. I remember the mayor asked my husband, "Are you going to run for Senator?" My husband said, "No, I'm in the race for governor. I'm going to stay in there," which he sincerely felt in his heart and what he wanted more than anything else. Well, what kind of commitment is that?

At that point, my husband told him the exact truth. He was in the race for governor. However, with the vicissitudes of politics--the political maneuverings, the power plays and the pressure--then, and only then, he reluctantly consented to run for the Senate. Why couldn't Mayor Christopher have been as--what is the word I want to use?--magnanimous or as flexible and realistic as my husband was? But Christopher stubbornly stayed in the Senate race.

The governor won. He won the primary contest against Christopher, but what good was winning that race. Time and energy were spent campaigning against a fellow Republican, when that precious time and energy should have been spent campaigning against Democrat Congressman Clair Engle, who benefitted from the Knight-Christopher battle. The Democrats were united. They were having no problems in their party. Christopher received 700,000 (Knowland right-to-work) votes, really. Well, those 700,000 Christopher-Knowland votes went to Engle. That's what the governor lost by. But, Knowland lost by a million! (Little consolation for the governor.) But it was nice to know there were more voters who voted for Knight, with all his battle scars, than those who voted for Knowland.

Here is a nice tribute to the governor, in that connection, recorded in a story during the campaign in the Los Angeles Examiner, October 12, 1958 (this story from Hermosa Beach, a precious gift to me on my birthday): "While Knowland, Republican candidate for governor, was accorded generous applause, the greeting he was given was in distinct contrast with that given Knight when the 600 guests gave Knight a standing ovation."

It's things such as this that prove the campaign could have been a good, fair race had Christopher not insisted on staying in that race. We also would have had more money. As I said before, it was the only race he ever lost--through no fault of his own. It never should have happened. It was disastrous for the Republican party in California. I don't know why Mr. Christopher should be so bitter and unhappy. I think if anyone should have been unhappy (which he was) and could have been bitter it was my husband. He had another saying, "Life is too short to be little." Mr. Christopher to this day,

Knight: undoubtedly, is probably still bitter. You mentioned you ~~are~~ interviewing him for this oral history series on Governor Knight. I would hope, as time goes on, that he would understand. I have told you the truth. As I have already told you, and I want to repeat it: The only conversation the governor and the mayor had relative to the Senate race took place in that brief moment, on August 20, 1957 at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco.

Sharp: You certainly seem to have your memory and facts together.

Knight: In connection with facts and dates, I do fortunately have a good memory. And I saved everything! Contrast this, what I am about to say, with George Christopher--the difference in men. The importance of this is in reference to what Richard Graves, Goodwin Knight's Democratic opponent for governor in 1954, said about him. In a memo to Newt Stearns from a member of Knight's staff, William E. "Bill" Gilless, on March 1, 1957 he wrote (reads): "Richard Graves is a long time personal, not political friend of mine. I met him today in (Assemblyman) Bill Munnell's office for the first time in a couple of years. Some of his remarks may be of interest to you and the governor." (Now, remember, this is from a political opponent in the opposite party. It's too bad that Christopher couldn't have been this magnanimous. I don't mean to be disrespectful.)

Now, quoting Richard Graves directly from Gilless' memo: "The governor has done a much better job than any of us thought he would, and I'm speaking as one who would probably be better served personally if the governor had failed to do a good job. The governor has a few problems in his own party, but he is unbeatable. Knowland cannot successfully challenge the governor. For one thing, Knowland does not have acceptance in the Democratic party that the governor has. I ran against the governor at the right time. I was the wrong candidate. But I can see no candidate in either party when all of the clouds have been blown away that can give the governor any kind of a race."

There were several other qualifying remarks, Gilless' memo went on, but I was impressed that he was telling what he believed to be the truth because he had no reason to do otherwise. Now, isn't that a fine tribute from a political opponent in another party? That was in March, 1957, when my husband was still in the race for governor and Knowland was in the race too.

Sharp: It's really remarkable.

Knight: Here is another one for you! Now, this is after the Senate race. Clair Engle has won the election. Two and a half weeks later, Wednesday, November 19, 1958 in the Los Angeles Herald-Express, Associated Press story: "Engle sees Cal. Blow at Nixon." Engle said Nixon "engineered this musical chairs business."

Knight: "Knight and Knowland were fighting like men until he [Nixon] interceded and ran them in tandem," Engle asserted.

Engle said the Knight switch "was no favor to me." Knight, he said, was "the toughest campaigner the Republicans had in California."

"You couldn't lay a glove on him," Engle said. "I don't believe I could hit him with a handful of sand."

Isn't that unusual and startling, really, to receive a tribute like that from your opponent?

Sharp: It certainly is.

Knight: So I think maybe that will close that episode. I wanted to close it on the Engle and Graves quote though. They are high notes, and are certainly outstanding tributes from two political opponents.

Sharp: That's a very good inclusion. I'm glad we have it.

Knight: In finishing with the '58 campaign, after the dismal returns reached us in the wee hours of the morning at the Embassy Room in the Ambassador Hotel (the same room where Senator Robert Kennedy was shot later in his quest for the presidency), we returned to our suite at the Biltmore Hotel. (Incidentally, in the course of presidential politics, we paid our respects to Governor Adlai Stevenson in that same suite when he was running for president.) In a news story the next day it stated: "Knight Disillusioned but not Disheartened." That will give you a key to the magnanimity--the fibre--of Goodwin Knight.

KNIGHT FOR GOVERNOR HEADQUARTERS
3335 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles 5, California

NEWS RELEASE
TUESDAY - OCTOBER 17, 1961
A.M.'s

Former Governor Goodwin J. Knight sprung another double barreled surprise today when he revealed that a San Francisco public relations counselor, who was Northern California Co-ordinator last year for Richard Nixon's campaign for the Presidency, has been named to direct Knight's state-wide campaign for the Republican nomination for Governor.

Robert G. Alderman of San Rafael, who was Executive Secretary to Knight for four and one-half years, has taken charge of the campaign which promises to be one of the hottest in California history. Alderman stated that he is firmly convinced that Knight is the only candidate who can defeat Governor Brown next year. "Knight will draw heavy Democratic support, as evidenced by his 1950 campaign for re-election as Lieutenant Governor when he took both nominations, and his 1954 campaign for Governor when he swamped the Democratic nominee," Alderman said. "On the other hand, it appears very obvious that the Kennedy crowd would defeat Nixon at the polls if he should be the GOP nominee, as it would once and for all eliminate him from national contention," he continued.

Knight's campaign manager went on to say that Brown would not have been a candidate for Governor in 1958 if Knight had sought re-election. He stated that Knight was forced out of the gubernatorial race in 1958 by Nixon, resulting in Brown's election. "I can say most emphatically that Knight will not withdraw from the race this year," Alderman declared. "He is in there to stay because he is the only man who can defeat 'Pat' Brown."

The announcement came as something of a surprise because of the fact that Knight and Alderman parted company in 1954 in Sacramento following a misunderstanding. Alderman has this comment to make concerning his departure from the Governor's office; "I have said a thousand times in the intervening years that Governor Knight did me a great favor at that time because I had been working much too hard and was jeopardizing my health. I now welcome the opportunity to rejoice him in his fight to restore responsible government in California."

IX THE INCOMPLETE CAMPAIGN FOR RE-ELECTION, 1961-1962

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Sharp: The next campaign I want to talk about is the one in 1961-62 when he ran again for governor. Did the governor campaign any differently or did he take a different attitude?

Knight: No. He decided he was going to run again in August 1961, and he just picked up the reins right where he left off. Campaigning is campaigning. We opened up a nice headquarters not far from here on Wilshire Boulevard, three blocks from his boyhood home. An interesting note here, his Hollywood headquarters on Cahuenga Boulevard, which my mother and dad and brother, Richard, were in charge of, was the same place that used to be Knight's Garage, where Goodwin as a lad worked with his father. It was certainly a sentimental time when we opened that special headquarters. It is still there, just as it was, a half a block north of Hollywood Boulevard.

This was another high point in our lives together. People came to the headquarters and picked up literature to give out. "How can I help?" "What can I do?" Telephones ringing! It started out just fine. He felt confident. A group of young people came to see him. They had taken a poll, and Knight was far ahead in the race for governor. An enthusiastic young man by the name of Ralph Andrews who became acquainted with the governor by seeing him on television (who later became a successful television producer) was in charge of this delegation. I remember during all of this campaigning, somehow he broke his leg! But he kept on going for Knight on crutches! His admiration and enthusiasm for Governor Knight could not be diminished. Young and old--the people loved him.

Contributions were coming in. Of course, there was speculation what Nixon was going to do. Was Nixon going to run for governor? He had seen Dick Nixon the month before and Mr. Nixon told him he wasn't going to run for governor. He believed him. Nixon told him to go ahead and announce.

Knight: I remember the day Howard Edgerton came here to our home. He is a prominent Republican leader and a friend of Knight and Nixon. It was the day our French provincial coffee-table arrived. As the three of us, my husband, Mr. Edgerton and I, were walking past it toward our front door, I was admiring it, and Mr. Edgerton said, "Do you think it will fit into the Governor's Mansion?" That was saying, "Well, he's going to be governor again." Of course, furniture is not taken to the mansion. But it was a nice thing to say. Then he and my husband went to see Richard Nixon.

Howard Edgerton had called my husband and invited him and Howard Ahmanson to lunch, which was served in his office, on Wilshire Boulevard, on August 3, 1961. Mr. Edgerton told him that Mr. Nixon had told him that he did not want to run for governor in 1962. My husband told him that he was going to run. Thereafter, Mr. Edgerton called and said he had been in conference with Mr. Nixon and that they wanted to meet with him on Monday, August 7. A meeting was arranged for that date at the home where the Nixons were staying. Mr. Edgerton said that since he had been out there and that Goodwin had not, that he would call for him at our home and drive him there.

The Nixons were staying with friends while their new home was being built in the expensive, exclusive Truesdale Estates above Beverly Hills. Friends were here swimming in the pool. We were having a pleasant gathering as we so often did. It was a very happy day--that Monday, August 7, 1961. My husband came home and he did a little tap dance, as he so often did when he was happy, and he whistled and he said, "Dick's not going to run!" And he was happy!

He was assured. Nixon said that he wasn't going to run for governor. So he felt good about it because he didn't want to get in a primary fight with Nixon. Nixon told him that he did not want to run for governor because he was only interested in national and international questions. And then he said, "You go ahead. You announce."

Joe Shell was an attractive young assemblyman and a very nice fellow. He's a former football player from USC. He and his family live just two blocks from here on Muirfield Road. My mother was his appointee on the Republican Central Committee, so they were good friends. He was popular in the Republican party. He wanted to run for governor. Dick Nixon said, "Don't worry about Joe Shell. Just before the primary election, I'll endorse you if Joe Shell is in the race. I'll endorse you about three weeks before the primary."

Well, that was fine and they shook hands--and, as I said, my husband came home, happy, and we went into the campaign. On September 11, 1961, my husband announced for governor again. I have a copy of his statement. I'll just read the first paragraph: "The governorship of California is the greatest public trust and the highest honor our people can bestow upon any citizen. I am a candidate for governor of California in 1962."

Knight: Then he went on with the statement and I'll give you a copy of it. We had a fine campaign. Such wonderful--heartwarming response! At headquarters people were volunteering their services and we were hanging pictures and banners, and here we were in another campaign! It was just fine. Terrific!

But, still, people didn't know about this meeting with Nixon, Edgerton, and Knight. So people were wondering and saying: Governor Knight's in the race, but what is Dick Nixon going to do here in California? What are his plans?

Then the night arrived for Richard Nixon's big announcement at the Statler Hilton Hotel, Wednesday, September 27. Is he, or isn't he, going to run for governor? We were sitting here in this room where you and I are sitting now. At that time, the television was there [pointing to a corner of the room.] We had two chairs right here [pointing again to show the position.] Goodwin sat here and I sat there next to him. The newsmen were all around us. The television cameras were grinding, periodically, to catch the expression on our faces. Many of the cameramen had taken pictures of our wedding. As I said, we were relaxed because, after all, Nixon had told him and Mr. Edgerton that he wasn't going to run for governor--just a month before. Richard Nixon came on and he talked about California. (I have a copy of Mr. Nixon's statement.) Then toward the end of the whole thing he said, "I have decided to be a candidate for governor."

There was a picture of us in the paper the next day. (I'll show you the picture.) I was like this. [She grimaces.] The cameras caught that fleeting devastating moment. My eyes were closed. Goodwin was looking at me tenderly. I said, "Oh!" I gave it away, the disappointment, naturally--just "Oh, no!" But we didn't say a word. We treated the newsmen to coffee and cookies. Then the governor said, "Well, we've really got another campaign. Here we go again!" (Mr. Edgerton told the governor that Nixon was going to run during that famous phone call on September 8th, but we still hoped it wasn't true.)

The newsmen loved him. They said, "Don't worry, Goodie, we're for you." They were so nice.

It was a terrible disappointment, but we went on with the campaign.

Dick Nixon had said at that August 7 meeting that Howard Edgerton would be his emissary: "Any news that I want to get through to you, Howard will let you know."

Knight: Goodwin was very much in the race and getting good support. He was very popular. He had been on television and he was a good campaigner--the best--a tireless campaigner. Remember what Clair Engle said about him: "You couldn't lay a glove on him. I don't believe I could hit him with a handful of sand." That's worth repeating.

Now, this is all recorded history--charges, counter-charges, headlines and all.

Sharp: What was said in the phone call?

Knight: On Thursday, September 7, 1961, while we were in Sacramento, Ann Ladd, my husband's secretary called the El Dorado Hotel where we were staying. I took the message from Ann. She said that "Mr. Edgerton has been trying to reach the governor by phone all afternoon," and that "Mr. Edgerton had told her the call was urgent."

When the governor returned at 6:30 p.m. I gave him the urgent message from Ann. Mr. Edgerton had given Ann his unlisted number--WEBster 8-1277. My husband called the number, but there was no answer. He called information in Los Angeles to ascertain the number at Mr. Edgerton's residence. He called it and there was no answer. We then went to Stockton to a meeting with Mr. Paul Mason, long-time personal friend and a member of his staff when he was governor; and Mr. and Mrs. Bert Abraham, also dear friends. Mr. Abraham was a newspaper publisher, and a former president of the California Newspaper Publishers' Association. We all discussed the urgent call from Mr. Edgerton.

The next morning, September 8th, Goodwin called Mr. Edgerton at his private number. He answered the phone himself. Paul Mason and I leaned over the phone because we were anxious to hear the urgent message which Mr. Edgerton had to give:

"Hello, Howard, this is Goodie."

The first thing I heard Mr. Edgerton say was, "Dick is going to run for governor."

Then my husband said, "Well, I am going to run, too."

Mr. Edgerton then said, "Will you meet with Dick and Bob Finch?"

My husband answered, "Yes, but for what reason?"

Mr. Edgerton said, "He will offer you anything--the chief justice of the supreme court--or any job you want in California if you won't run for governor."

My husband was very firm and he said, "You can tell Dick I am in the race to stay--and it will be a tough fight."

STATEMENT OF FORMER GOVERNOR GOODWIN J. KNIGHT

September 27, 1961

The people of our state believe in the integrity and fairness of our direct primary law.

Now that Mr. Nixon has decided to run for Governor I look forward to a full and fair discussion of all the problems facing our state. Although the primary campaign should be vigorous and decisive in every detail, it should not be bitter nor personal because, after June 5, 1962, the victor must enter the final test with a United Party.

To all the people of California I pledge an honest and fighting campaign all the way every day.

Knight: My husband's reaction was surprise and I remember he bristled and said, "What right does Dick Nixon have to offer me a job!"

I remember my husband saying, "No, Howard, I don't want any part of it. I won't meet with them. I am going right back to Los Angeles and prepare my announcement. I am going to run anyway and you can tell Dick for me that he will face a real tough campaign!"

Mr. Edgerton then said, "Well, think this over--don't move too fast. I am going to Seattle for three days and when I come back we can all sit down and talk this over."

The governor said, "It won't be necessary--I am going to run anyway. Goodbye."

We left Sacramento at 12:30 p.m. Friday, September 8. When we landed at the airport, he phoned television people and made arrangements to make a television film of his announcement as a candidate for governor. He went to a television studio, prepared the statement, made the film that evening and it was mailed the next day to television stations all over California. On Monday, September 11, he announced for governor.

These are the facts. This is the truth.

We had hoped that Mr. Edgerton would confirm this, but he could not be reached. For days it was in the headlines--front page! He was referred to as the mystery man. The governor said he would not be surprised if Edgerton would dispute this or claim that he made the offer on his own initiative--or even on the governor's behalf because: First, since September 8, he had heard nothing further from Mr. Edgerton, but Mr. Edgerton had been conferring with Mr. Nixon and his aides and had lunch with Mr. Nixon at Mr. Nixon's place on Friday, September 22, 1961; Second, Mr. Edgerton was and had been for many years a close friend and financial supporter and advisor of Mr. Nixon.

That was the phone call. The rumor had gotten out about this call. The reporters called and asked the governor if it were true, and he didn't deny it. He said, "Yes, it's true." Well, you should have seen the headlines the next day--two inches high! September 29: "Nixon Offer" "Emissary Mystery Man Tries To Get Knight Out Of The Race." "I Have Proof Nixon Offered Deal--Knight." Nixon denied it; he said, "It's a lie."

The controversy went on until the big press conference on October 4. (It was during the World Series--competition for television time.) But interested people, pro and con, were watching us--and the response was overwhelming.

Knight: The televised press conference was held at our Wilshire Boulevard headquarters. We were both interrogated by the press and so was Paul Mason. The reporters questioned the three of us thoroughly. The truth cannot be shaken. Upon completion, even members of the press said they believed us.

The phones were ringing at headquarters! When we arrived home telegrams and messages of support came to us by the hundreds. "It's without a doubt, we can tell you are telling the truth."

Hundreds of news stories were coming in from our clipping service throughout the state, I am quoting one of them on October 10, "Knight Comes Out Winner"

The Knight-Nixon feud has subsided but the embers will continue to smolder for many months. Governor Knight, in our humble opinion, came out the winner in the charges that he hurled. His sincerity before that group of hard-hitting reporters cannot be questioned.

And when Mrs. Goodwin Knight stood before them and stated with dignity that, "My husband is telling the truth," no one with an ounce of grey matter could question her statement. It rang so true that not a hard-boiled reporter in the room had the heart to question her sincerity.

The Knights together, Goodwin and Virginia, were the unquestioned winners in a verbal bout that will have far-reaching repercussions next June in the primary.

The Anaheim Gazette has had many telephone calls from responsible Democrats who have indicated that they will change their registration to vote for Goodwin Knight. Nixon will find out that the Los Angeles hierarchy cannot win the election without the support of the little people.

Sharp: We appreciate your sharing so much of this with us.

Knight: It is time for all the truth to be known about this. Although it has been recorded in the newspapers. But the personal things I have told you are important.

Sharp: The campaign was still on. Can you tell me what happened after the big controversy with Mr. Nixon?

Knight: Well, the governor campaigned vigorously and I was right there with him--an extra pair of hands to greet the throngs of people. Enthusiastic crowds everywhere we went. Democrats becoming Republicans so they could vote for Knight! We were thriving on it. We felt good because we were getting so much dedicated support. Then, I'll never forget...

Knight: It was the day after Thanksgiving, we had spent a lovely Thanksgiving, as usual, with our families. How blessed we were. We were here in this room, our den-library, and he became ill--very ill. It was right there [points to couch]. I called our doctor, Carl Lund. He came over and we went immediately to St. Joseph's Hospital in Burbank. After tests, it was learned that he had hepatitis.

Another blow--another disappointment.

Devoted friends and enthusiastic and energetic supporters said, "We'll carry on the campaign for you, Goodie. Stay in the race!" He fully intended to do just that. We were deluged with calls, cards and letters. We couldn't open them all at that time. He was so ill and uncomfortable, but he never complained. Beautiful flowers and plants arrived. People were so wonderful with their love and their prayers--and we believed in prayer. There's where the real power is--where our strength came from. He was in the hospital for a month and home here in bed for two more months--(that part I remember but it is not as vivid--it was too painful.) He was fighting for his strength. He had to lie flat on his back. Time weighed heavily--but it was rushing on too fast. While he was in the hospital I visited headquarters briefly and tried to cheer our friends. But I spent all of my days and evenings with him--to help cheer him. I remember I would nap, occasionally, in a reclining chair the hospital brought in.

Finally the sad realization that he had to withdraw from the race because of his health. That was the last campaign.

Sharp: That's sad, really. Did Mr. Knight help Joe Shell, who was still in the '62 Republican primary race after Mr. Knight had to withdraw?

Knight: You must remember that my husband was recuperating from a serious illness at that time. Joe came over to see us (he lived only two blocks away.) We were good friends. He and the governor sat out by the pool and talked.

Sharp: We just wondered, since Mr. Knight obviously didn't want Mr. Nixon to win, did he then take Shell's side?

Knight: No, he didn't. It was (I am using that word again) unrealistic and sour grapes, as the saying goes. After all, he had recently been very ill. He couldn't campaign for anyone then.

But it was hard for us to sit and watch the parade go by.

(In that '61 campaign it is interesting to note that the governor's executive secretary, Bob Alderman, when he was lieutenant governor, was his campaign manager; and H.R. (Bob) Haldeman was Nixon's state campaign chairman. Bob Alderman and Bob Haldeman!)

Knight: Truth is stranger than fiction. During that campaign, there was a precious little five year old girl--Governor Knight's granddaughter, Heather Eaton. Last June 30, 1979, Heather became the bride of Harry R. (Bob) Haldeman's son, Hank, a nice young man. Life does go on...

X BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH CAMPAIGNING, 1966; LATER INTERESTS

Knight: But, Sarah, still, there was another campaign, in '66 [laughs], and he bounced back. There was speculation, and that glint came back in his blue eyes. In 1966 his health was regained. To give you an idea of the kind of man he was, he was ready to try it again to vindicate what happened to him in '58, in a way, and, of course, because he loved being governor! He had bounced back. He was still popular and a state-wide figure. And, he had something else going for him--television. His health had been fully regained.

Sharp: Who came to talk to him in 1966 suggesting that he might be able to run for governor again?

Knight: I don't remember the specific people. Republican leaders. However, by that time, there was somebody new on the Republican horizon. A movie actor who also had charisma. He had been seen for several years, not only in his movies, but also on television where he did commercials on a program called "Death Valley Days," sponsored by General Electric. He had good coverage. He was attractive and articulate. He had a good voice and good delivery. When Senator Barry Goldwater was seeking the presidency, Ronald Reagan made hundreds of speeches for him. It became known as "the speech." That exposure, too, gave him good coverage. He had built up a strong Republican following. Look what "the speech" did for him! He was very much in evidence. He had a lot going for him.

However, there was some speculation and interest for Goodwin Knight for governor in 1966. But Ronald Reagan was a new Republican prospect, and he had endeared himself to the Republicans. He had a lot of support. And he was going all over making the speech.

I remember, with all this talk about Ronald Reagan as a possibility as a candidate for governor, a call came in one day here at our home from Ronald Reagan, from Phoenix, Arizona. I answered the phone.

Knight: It was Easter week. He said that they went there every Easter vacation to visit Nancy's mother and stepfather. I remember that he said he had a cold. I suggested for him to take a lot of Vitamin C (which I believe in). We had a pleasant conversation. I remember his exact words--I can still hear them: "I just want the governor to hold my hand."

Nothing specific happened. Later, my husband endorsed him for governor. Quoting the Herald-Examiner, "Ronald Reagan invades agricultural areas of northern California today after receiving strong endorsement from Republican Governor Goodwin J. Knight." The governor also introduced him at the "L.A. County United Republican Finance Committee dinner which attracted 2458 persons." It was a \$100-a-plate dinner held in the Hollywood Palladium. Ronald Reagan was on his way toward being the 33rd governor of California.

I remember the first time we met Nancy and Ronald Reagan. Mr. Reagan was master of ceremonies at a dinner-dance sponsored by the Beverly Hills B'Nai B'Rith honoring Mary Pickford. It was held at the Biltmore Bowl--Biltmore Hotel, Sunday December 11, 1960 (two days after my husband's birthday.) The governor was to make the presentation to Miss Pickford, who was a good friend of his. I sat with Nancy Reagan. (Co-incidentally, we both have the same middle name, "Frances.") Because I am interested in astrology, I like to ask people what astrological sign they are. As I remember she said that her birthday is July 6, and that her husband was born in February--(Aquarius). (This is just an aside in remembering that evening.) Both of our husbands were shining stars that night! Observing Mr. Reagan's good personality and delivery, the governor with his great spirit and warm good humor, said, looking at Ronald Reagan, "All I hope is that you will stay out of my business--and I'll stay out of yours!" [laughs]

There was another occasion I remember after that where we were at the same occasion with the Reagans. There was a small reception for George Meany, president of the American Federation of Labor, who always supported the governor. I remember it was held in the same reception room in the Beverly Hills Hotel where we celebrated our wedding luncheon.

Now, in going on to the '66 campaign. Goodwin wasn't too disappointed regarding that race--that this last premature speculation about his candidacy did not materialize. He was happy and popular. He was much in demand for making speeches which he thoroughly enjoyed. He was very active! He helped organize the Imperial Bank, where he went every day. This bank became very successful, and the good name of Goodwin Knight helped it toward its phenomenal growth of fifteen branches. He was on the board of directors of the bank and also actively helpful to the City of Hope as chairman of its board of directors. Many, many other activities filled his life. Among them, he was the national president of his Alpha Delta Phi fraternity.

Knight: And, he was on television which he also thoroughly enjoyed doing. His twice nightly broadcasts during the news hour were stimulating for him! Television was a perfect medium for Goodwin Knight--with his warm personality, his storehouse of knowledge--an outlet for the gems of wisdom that sparkled in his brilliant mind.

He was so quick on the up-take. He could think of a subject for his programs--and gather his thoughts as he drove to the studio which was only about three miles from home. He was so well versed that he didn't have to ponder about it. Sometimes he would write a few things out, but if he didn't have a subject for the moment, he spoke extemporaneously! He was very articulate. During many of his speeches he'd pick people out of the audience and mention them by name and remember some particular thing about them. People hearing this tape in years to come may say, as I said before, "Naturally, she's prejudiced." But I am not the only one who recognized his worth and warmth and ability.

He was kind of like the late, great movie star, Spencer Tracy--ruggedly handsome and strong. He could tell clever stories, yet he was very serious. As I was telling you earlier, he could have been a preacher. He had spoken in the pulpit on many occasions. He was religious, a very spiritual man, and we prayed every morning and every night; and before big decisions we would open the Bible and ask for guidance.

God was good to him. He was a very talented man. George Jessell, known as "Mr. Toastmaster," during an evening at the Century Plaza Hotel honoring Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, upon introducing my husband said, "Goodie Knight is the greatest speaker of them all." And Mr. Toastmaster General, as he was called, had heard a few speakers in his long lifetime!

Sharp: That is all of our questions, but I wanted to ask you two other questions. Were you involved as a Republican woman in the Republican women's organizations in California?

Knight: Yes. I was born into a politically oriented family. They were active Republicans, so I came by it naturally. I'm a fatalist. I think that we all have a destiny and that nothing, really, happens by chance. Sometimes, by our own free will, we can avoid our destiny--but I think we are born into certain families so we can pursue our talents. My darling mother and stepfather and I came out here when I was five years old, and they didn't know a soul. My mother and father, Lawrence Piergue, were divorced. In later years I grew to know and love him, too. He owned a restaurant and theater.

Knight: My stepfather was a brilliant man, who later became advertising manager for the International Harvester Company for the southwestern part of the United States. My mother was beautiful, talented, and personable. She wrote lovely poetry. When she was a girl in high school in Iowa she won the state's first prize for her recitation of "If" by Rudyard Kipling. My mother and dad were a good team. Mother enjoyed making speeches and she loved people, so she found herself in politics. She organized and was first president of the West Adams Women's Club, and she and my dad organized the Citizen's Council. The mayor of Los Angeles, city councilmen, supervisors, civic leaders were members. In these connections mother met Goodwin Knight when he was a young man. It was in this atmosphere of activity that I grew up. At the dinner table I heard about Governor Frank Merriam from Iowa! I passed out handbills and campaign literature--"Merriam for Governor"--when I was a young girl!

When I was 21 I was married to a handsome man of 23. When he was killed in World War II, that was the first time my laughter stopped--the first time I died. I have died twice before my time--when I lost Lyle, and then, again, when I lost Goodwin.

But life goes on--I devoted my life, after Lyle was killed, to civic work and veterans' rehabilitation, and putting on entertainment for them in the veterans' hospitals. And I was on television; and, in that connection, I met Goodwin Knight. Then, the laughter came back into my life, and I started living again.

Stein:* Will you tell us some of your other memories of your life at the mansion?

Knight: I am sure by now you can tell that the governor and I loved living in that lovely, historic home!

Stein: Yes, I certainly can.

Knight: Another unique and happy event which we inaugurated there was our annual open house. It was held the first Sunday after New Year's while the festive Christmas trees and decorations were on display for our visitors to enjoy. We even put Christmas lights in the cupola--glowing for the residents of Sacramento to see from miles away. At our last open house, just a few days before we left Sacramento, eight thousand people came to see us and the mansion. There's a picture of that occasion. Here is the brochure that each guest received, "The History of the Executive Mansion."

*The following passage from the May 1977 interview recorded by Miriam Stein was relocated here by Mrs. Knight during her review of the transcript.

Knight: One Sunday it rained, and the dear people were standing out in front with their umbrellas. Bless their hearts. We opened the big front doors earlier that day. We greeted and shook hands with everyone who came. (This is a humorous note: We both were reaching out with both hands--there were so many to greet--we found we were shaking each other's hand!)

Stein: I can just picture it.

Knight: Yes, I can't help smiling as I remember--and crying too. The people truly enjoyed and appreciated seeing the inside of this interesting home where the pages of history still dwelled. It was very successful each year--thousands came from all over. The response was heartwarming for everyone.

We also opened the mansion for tours during the week when different clubs and organizations met in Sacramento. I remember members of the American Legion came whom we greeted. Of course, those were special occasions. We were too busy to conduct personal tours. My secretary did that. And we were away a lot of the time. But we did open the mansion.

Stein: Your annual open house was open to the general public?

Knight: Yes. And you can be sure the kitchen was busy on those days.

Stein: I can imagine. Did you serve cookies? ##

Knight: We served coffee and cookies to members of the press and television crews who would gather in Ellen's kitchen--to be sure! However, we could not serve refreshments--there were just too many people! I remember one darling couple in their eighties. The Chris Littles. She hadn't been in the mansion since she was a little girl. Here's their picture with us. They later gave us that wonderful picture there on the wall of the mansion the way it was when she was a little girl. We stood at the entrance, just inside the big front doors, and greeted dear friends like these.

Stein: And the portraits?

Knight: Yes, the portraits of all the first ladies who lived in the executive mansion. We thought, because the governors have their portraits on display on the walls of the capitol, why shouldn't their wives be displayed on the walls where each governor and his lady lived? I am pleased to know that they are back on the walls of the mansion where my secretary, Betty Henderson, and I placed them. I was unhappy when I learned that they were taken down when Governor and Mrs. Reagan lived there briefly. I understand that many letters were written to Governor Reagan, and that pressure helped put the ladies back where they belonged--out of the pages of history--so the people of today can see them as they tour the mansion, in the frames I selected

Knight: for them. In an interview in the Sacramento Bee, July 30, 1958, I predicted that this home would someday be a museum. I am pleased to say that prediction of mine came true. Tours are conducted every day at the governor's mansion.

Sharp: You really enjoyed living in the mansion, didn't you?

Knight: Yes, who wouldn't? But more than the grandeur of the shining chandeliers, the oriental rugs, was the feeling of being and living where history, the history of California, was alive.

I have already mentioned that we inaugurated a series of dinner parties for the legislators and their wives. We would have fifty or sixty guests at each dinner. They were very successful. This was something new. They were appreciated and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. Mrs. Warren, heretofore, had a tea for the wives. We thought it would be nice for the wives to join their husbands, dress their prettiest, and dine with the governor and his wife at the mansion. Governor Warren had a series of stag parties. We livened up the mansion! We were pleased that they became a tradition.

Living in a mansion when you are first married is quite an experience! Fortunately, I am not a worrier. In fact, I really hadn't thought about what my life would be like. I believe in prayer, and always pray for strength and guidance.

There was so much excitement surrounding my first arrival at our home. Hundreds of messages were there awaiting us--and more wedding gifts! I was grateful for the capable assistance of Gwen Couch, Mrs. Warren's secretary. She was wonderful. Gwen was with me until she became very ill, and, reluctantly for both of us, had to leave the pressure of this kind of work. I then was fortunate to have my dear Jean Bever--and then later, my darling Betty Henderson who was with me until we left Sacramento. They are still my special, precious friends today. They always remember my birthday, and we talk long-distance every so often.

In this connection, I remember when Governor Reagan was elected. Now, they were in Sacramento, living in the mansion, experiencing a new episode in their lives. Nancy Reagan's secretary, Nancy Reynolds, called me (out of the blue) one evening. I remember her exclaiming, "It's overwhelming! All the invitations and everything! What should we do?"

How well I remembered. I had faced it all too. "What about the Tuesday Club?" I told her that was important--especially for a new first lady. The important club ladies of Sacramento, as is their custom, wanted to extend a warm welcome to the governor's wife. I told her that eventually they would be able to determine the ones they would be able to accept. (You can't accept them all!) At a time like that you have to have someone to talk to, and I am glad that she reached out and talked to me.

Knight: I told Miss Reynolds that I would make up a list, reaching back in my memory, and would call her. There was too much to relate to have to take the time to put it in a letter! In preparing to talk with you I found my notes, which were very extensive. Seven pages on legal-size paper. I called her and gave her this information, and I hope it was helpful. I am sure they did all right.

Before the governor and I left the mansion, I invited Bernice Brown to come over and see her new home. (Goodwin and I had conducted a tour when they had attended a dinner we had for the constitutional officers. I remember my husband, with that great sense of humor he had, said to Pat on that occasion: "Don't like it too much, Pat!") I conducted an extensive tour for her. When she left I presented her with a very nice detailed brochure that Betty, my secretary, and I had prepared for her. This took place on December 29, 1958--just a week before we left our beautiful home.

January 5, 1959 was Inauguration Day for the new administration. We had arranged for flowers to be in the main rooms to greet the new residents, Governor and Mrs. Edmund G. Brown, Sr. I remember their luggage arrived. They were to have a big celebration party there that evening. Governor Brown's tuxedo arrived and Bernice Brown's lovely Inaugural Ball gown arrived. Because I was still upstairs waiting for my husband, I hung up their garments. There was a large book, which appeared to be a scrapbook, which I placed on a table beside what I thought would also be the new governor's comfortable chair in the master bedroom.

The excellent cateress we had, Helen Perry and her staff were busily engaged in the kitchen. Guests were beginning to arrive at the big front entrance--

We walked down the winding stairway for the last time in our beautiful home--that only four and a half years before held us in its arms with our fondest hopes and dreams--full of promise. We were sad, naturally, but we both felt a warm feeling of pride and accomplishment because we knew that our years together in Sacramento were happy and successful and filled with dear and enduring friendships; and, Goodwin's seven and a half years before, as lieutenant governor, were years of great accomplishments too. That is the most important thing--how you did your job and the good that you did to help others.

Goodwin Knight left a successful law practice at a great monetary sacrifice to become lieutenant governor. When he was governor his salary was twenty-five thousand a year!

So with our hearts full and our heads held high we said goodbye to Sacramento with hope in our hearts for our new life back home in Los Angeles. Congratulations and blessings to the new family and their life in the mansion! This chapter of our life was closed. We quietly slipped out the side entrance--and it was raining.

XI ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS ON LIFE WITH GOODWIN KNIGHT

Knight: We returned home to Los Angeles on January 6, 1959. We stayed the previous night at Ronald Button's apartment because of the rain. Governor Brown had thoughtfully offered us the use of the reliable "Grizzly," the plane that had served the Warrens and the Knights so faithfully. This was the very first time this plane was unable to take off for us because of the bad weather. It seemed Sacramento was unhappy to see us leave.

Before leaving, the next day, we drove by the mansion one last time together. A million precious memories tugged at our hearts. The mansion, standing straight and tall and proud, opening its arms to new friends and events. New pages, with its colorful, romantic and exciting history, had started to unfold.

In April 1960 we purchased this charming home. Incidentally, William Jennings Bryan, Jr., and his family lived here at one time. Isn't that an interesting coincidence? When Goodwin Knight was a little boy, living just two miles from here at 919 South New Hampshire, he admired and was captivated by the great orator, William Jennings Bryan, Sr. Speaking of the pages of history, if these walls could talk!

As you know by now, the month of May is significant in our lives. For the first time in twenty-four years Goodwin Knight was a private citizen. He made his first unofficial speech at a Law Day celebration on May 1: "A good lawyer is one who has the imagination to put himself in the other fellow's shoes and the courage to walk in them!"

We celebrated our first party here on Mother's Day. We had our own mansion right here, and Ellen was here too, just like old times. We still had our Scandinavian kitchen. Both sides of the family were here for our reunion. Of course, my mother and stepfather, my two brothers, Ralph and Richard, and their wives, Loeta and Jane, and my niece, Linda, who was one year old, and also one-year-old Jonathan, Goodwin's first grandson, and Carolyn and Charles, his parents. And

Knight: Goodwin's daughter, Marilyn, and Bob, her husband, and their adorable children, April and Heather. His sister, Dolly, and her family came up from Encinitas, between San Diego and San Clemente--which later was to be President Nixon's Western White House and his home after Watergate.

We had such happy gatherings here--and all the children (two other boys came to our family during the sixties: Carolyn's son, Robert Jess; and my nephew, Gary) learned to swim in our large swimming pool. "Grandpa" Knight was a good swimmer--and a good teacher!

Sharp: Do you consider yourself an active Republican?

Knight: Not as active as I have been in the past, naturally. These last years have been busy ones for me with many responsibilities. When my husband left us on May 22, 1970 there were many important decisions and responsibilities. The laughter stopped for me again--I was blessed to have my precious widowed mother here with me.

That first year I personally acknowledged approximately three thousand messages, letters, and flowers sent to me during and after Goodwin's funeral. There were so many--so many loving tributes from different parts of the world. I'm concerned that I still perhaps didn't acknowledge them all.

Then the great time-consuming responsibility of cataloguing and sending his papers and mementos to Stanford. My mother was ill the last two years of her life. She lived here with me and I took care of her. She passed away September 27, 1976. I miss her so much...

All of that (and I am still busy up to the present) did not afford me the time to busily engage in politics.

I am not as active and vocal now, naturally, as I was before I married the governor, and during my life as his wife. Politics, to me now--well, the flavor of it [pause]--Politics has changed in the recent events.

Sharp: Do you mean badly?

Knight: Yes, when I think of some of the things that have happened. We are all aware of Watergate and all those revelations--the misuse of power of men in high places. I can't help but think of many of those bright young men who went to prison because of it--and the stigma that will remain with their families and children. We are supposed to be able to look up to our leaders--admire them--and trust them.

Knight: Nationally syndicated Washington columnist Drew Pearson, in writing about Goodwin Knight said, "He has conducted an honest administration. He has been a good governor." Years later, when I gave his papers to Stanford, a column in the Sacramento Bee, October 2, 1975 said, "There was no hint of scandal in his administration."

No, Sarah, I am not active in politics. However, I will always have an interest. Once politics is in your blood it's there forever! It's just that I am on a different plateau of my life now. Years ago I was approached to run for Congress and for the legislature. It was most complimentary--but that wasn't for me! I have never aspired to public office--ever--then or now. I am giving you a memorandum concerning this. [see next page]

Sharp: I understand how busy your life was and is.

Knight: Yes. I didn't then, as the governor's wife, and I don't now, have time to attend committee meetings. I do attend luncheons and dinners occasionally, and give my name as a sponsor or chairman or cochairman for different important events. I receive many invitations. Here's one from a former Republican Congressman, Alphonso Bell. The governor helped him when Mr. Bell first became interested in politics. I would like to attend this gathering.

Frequently there are invitations to attend dinners for someone who is retiring. Here's one for a long-time Republican, Frank Lanterman, who recently retired and which was held in San Francisco. I couldn't attend, so I wrote him a letter reiterating my fond memories of him in Sacramento. All that takes time and I don't have a secretary. I wish I had you here!

Sharp: I can understand you must be very busy.

Knight: Yes. I am still called upon for interviews occasionally. And there are still some requests for recipes--and poems. I respond to every request. It does take time. I am trying to maintain this beautiful home--decide whether to lease it or to sell it. And I have big decisions concerning my Elephant-Eagle Gold Mine at Soledad Mountain five miles from the little town of Mojave. Goodwin and his father operated it in the mid-thirties. It turned out very well for him financially. I now own it, but I don't know anything about gold mining! I have been able to see that the proper assessment work is done every year, and get the appropriate reports to the Bureau of Land Management. It all takes time.

Sharp: The last question is a summary of everything we've said so far and that is, how did you feel about being the governor's wife?

Mrs. Virginia Knight

Offer to Mrs. Virginia Knight by Mrs. Valmar Oleska to consent to become a candidate for Congress, to be sponsored by the Republican Women and the American Institute of Fine Arts.

On Saturday morning, November 25, Governor Knight requested me to phone Mrs. Oleska that he and Mrs. Knight were leaving for San Diego and would not return until Monday, Nov. 27, and that Mrs. Knight would call her upon her return to the city. I did so in the afternoon of Saturday, Nov. 25.

In discussing the subject of which Mrs. Oleska has previously phoned Mrs. Knight, she mentioned that she had attended a dinner on Friday evening, Nov. 24, at the Ambassador Hotel, for the Los Angeles County Republican Assembly, and that Mrs. Knight's name was brought up as the logical woman of Los Angeles to run for Congress, and she said she had called Mrs. Knight to see how she felt about it. Mrs. Knight informed her that it certain is quite an honor, and she would think about it, and would consult her husband.

Mrs. Oleska told me that she is a member of the Los Angeles County Republican Assembly, a member of the American Institute of Fine Arts, and other groups, and that from time to time they were looking for a potential lady to run for Congress and that Mrs. Knight's name had been brought up a number of times, and she asked me how the Governor would feel about it. I told her the subject had not been discussed with me by them, but I was quite certain that the Governor would not object if it would make Mrs. Knight happy and if this is her wish. Mrs. Oleska said that Mrs. Knight's background in politics, with the aid of her husband, would make her an outstanding Congresswoman, and I told her I felt the same way about it.

I also mentioned to Mrs. Oleska that in October the Los Angeles Adult School (where I teach evenings) held an open house at which approximately 500 people from all walks of life attended, including the heads of the Board of Education, and that a certain group approached me to ask about the possibility of Mrs. Knight becoming a member of the Legislature, and that if she would be interested, they would really get together to support her. I told them I had not heard Mrs. Knight ever mentioning anything like this for herself, but that it would be worthwhile for them to talk with her about it, as she does possess all of the necessary qualifications, including experience in politics. They said they would stand firmly behind her and handle the campaign funds, etc. Mrs. Oleska was pleased to hear this, and she said that they would also handle the campaign funds if Mrs. Knight were willing to be a candidate.

I promised Mrs. Oleska that Mrs. Knight would call her personally on Monday, November 27, to discuss the matter further.

Ann Ladd
(Secretary Governor Knight)

Mrs. Valmar Oleska:	Studio:	270-4370
	Res:	933-5959

Knight: I think that I have already answered that in a hundred ways. I feel that it was fate that we met--that I was a member of a politically oriented family. I was interested in politics, and politics and people are synonymous. Like the governor, I, too, have an outgoing personality, and I like people. He had lost his dear wife, his lovely Arvilla. I had lost my dear Lyle. He had been through the pain of separation and loneliness. I had been in the depths of that same dark valley. Destiny brought us together and we picked up the pieces of our lives.

We had a glorious, exciting, rewarding life. We experienced once-in-a-lifetime heights and disappointments too. But we had each other through it all.

It's my birthday tomorrow, Columbus Day, October 12. It was dear of you to bring me these lovely pink roses, Sarah. And you didn't know that pink is my favorite color! Goodwin was twenty-two years older, but it didn't seem that way. He was youthful, but dignified. He had boundless energy--he was vital and vibrant. He was alive! He was "with it." He was enthusiastic with an insatiable thirst for accomplishment and unlimited search for knowledge. He was a prolific reader. He loved music and we danced, my Prince and I, and had a glorious time! We were a good team--so they said--and so I feel.

I am proud to have had the opportunity to be a part of this great state of California. It can become every girl's dream. I was a little five-year-old girl from Iowa, and we didn't know anyone here. But if you hold on to your dreams and have faith, and if you give of yourself in a loving positive way, and if you are at the right place at the right time, as I was, your dreams can become reality. If I had not been on television that night, May 20, 1951, I wouldn't have met Goodwin Knight. But I put forth the effort and fate opened the door.

Goodwin Knight was so much a part of my life--the most important part. I miss him. He is still alive in my heart. But I am not living in the past. I think you can observe that I am not here crying--except sometimes. I am lonely, but I'm going on and keeping busy.

Sharp: What are your plans now as you face your future--starting tomorrow on your birthday?

Knight: As I said, I shall continue to attend civic functions. I have friends over occasionally, and I still write poetry. Many of my verses have been published. There are some of my poetry awards on the wall. I would like to compile them in a book--I have hundreds! And I may write a book about my interesting life with Goodwin Knight. There are so many interesting and distinguished well-known and famous people whose lives have been intermingled with ours, and the events surrounding all of this would be of interest and historic value.

Knight: And my days are full with searching for old records and maps regarding our Elephant-Eagle mine. I have been receiving many inquiries concerning it. This dream of my husband's could become a reality because of the surprising price of gold now! I am sure if he were here now that this is what he would be doing. And I have his great shining spirit to help me.

Here is a copy of a letter which he wrote on July 27, 1967: "Answering your letter concerning my mine at Mojave; it is 90% gold production and 10% silver; and it has been shut down for twenty years. If they ever increase the price of gold it will become valuable property!"

Well, that time is here now. It's unbelievable! Gold is the highest it has ever been. It's \$223 an ounce.* This was another fond hope of my husband's, to "someday open up the mines again." Perhaps that hope of his (and mine now) may come true. By the way, one of our claims is called "Hope." Isn't that nice? Wouldn't it be exciting to be able to open up the mine again? It could happen, perhaps soon, hopefully!

It's a big decision when you have property like that. It was only loaned to me. I inherited it from my husband, but it was loaned to us from God. There is so much good I could do. I want to develop it in his memory. The Elephant-Eagle Gold Mine. The Elephant is for the Republican Party. The Eagle is the United States. It was discovered on December 1, 1896, one week before Goodwin Jess Knight was born on December 9, 1896 in Provo, Utah.

There are so many, many other fond recollections stirring in my memory, but I think I should close now and let the pages of history record the others.

Sharp: This was most interesting and informative. Thank you for including this for us.

Knight: I feel good about my life so far and tomorrow, on my birthday, I shall start a new year--grateful for the past and hopeful for the future.

I have enjoyed talking with you. You're lovely, really.

Sharp: We are really grateful that you would talk.

Knight: Thank you, Sarah, and Dr. "Mimi" Stein and Bancroft Library. I have enjoyed it. You and Dr. Stein were most helpful and patient and made it all easier for me. Thank you again.

*(1980: Gold is now over \$600 an ounce!)

XII ADDENDUM: MEMORIES OF PRESIDENTS AND OTHER FAMOUS MEN

Knight: You mentioned "other reflections" on my life with Goodwin Knight. My mind and heart are crowded with so many! Let me close, with memories stirred, by telling you of the great honor and privilege that was accorded me, because of my distinguished husband, to have the rare opportunity to meet and converse with four presidents of the United States! And the governor's and my favorite general, Douglas MacArthur.

Let me start with The General, as his darling wife, Jean, always referred to him. I was a bride of five months. The governor and I met with our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. A. Ronald Button, at the Statler-Hilton in downtown Los Angeles. We then met with The General and his wife and accompanied them to what was soon to be known as MacArthur Park, a few miles away. That was the general's seventy-fifth birthday, January 26, 1955. He dedicated the park--a memory forever to remain in my heart. There were speeches and banners and excitement! Everyone there knew and felt the significance of this historic event and the splendor of this great man.

There is more personal significance to me because my dad was on the committee. He served in the famous Rainbow Division in World War I, and General Douglas MacArthur was his commander.

The governor and I accompanied the general and his devoted Jean via parade to the Biltmore Hotel for the luncheon in their honor. My great honor and privilege was being seated next to him!

In the course of the conversation, I mentioned a certain photograph of him that was our favorite (standing on steps and waving) which he later sent to us autographed: "To Governor and Mrs. Goodwin J. Knight in fond remembrance of January 26, 1955." I also told him about a poem which I had written about him years before, as a war widow, when President Harry Truman recalled him from duty. That broke my heart when it happened, and I was compelled to write the poem which I entitled "A Tribute to the Unknown Soldier." April, 1951.

Knight: He asked me to send it to him which I did. The letter I received from him in response to his poem is one of my most treasured possessions.

That evening at the Ambassador Hotel THE most eloquent of them all made his speech. He recited a prose-poem called "Youth" during his remarks. Then, at the airport the next morning when he said goodbye to me he said: "Goodbye, lovely lady." Tears come to my eyes as I remember this.

As a bride of only one month I met President Dwight D. Eisenhower (the airport again). The governor and I were there to welcome him to California. As the governor greeted him and then introduced me, the president was so gracious when he said hello to the "new bride." Later in talking with the president on another occasion I mentioned that I knew his birthday was October 14, and mine is the 12th; that my former name was Carlson--which was Mamie Eisenhower's maiden name; and, that I was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa--just forty miles from where Mrs. Eisenhower was born in Boone, Iowa! He smiled and with his warm good humor said, "Well, that makes us almost related, doesn't it?" Another fond recollection.

And Mamie Eisenhower, possessing the same warmth and smile as her famous husband. I had a wonderful opportunity to visit with her at length, alone, as we drove from the Lockheed Air Terminal in Burbank to the Beverly-Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills on October 19, 1956. I reiterated my little personal story about her husband's and my October birthdays, two days apart; our mutual former name, Carlson--and our being born only forty miles apart in Iowa. She recalled the president had mentioned that to her "some time ago," she said as I mentioned it. She smiled and seemed very pleased. A lovely lady.

The governor had many pleasant visits with President Eisenhower when he was in California, and we had a very nice personal visit with both of them in their suite during the Republican National Convention.

Meeting Governor Adlai Stevenson was an exciting experience. We paid him a courtesy call in what was usually "our" suite (10334) when we stayed at the Biltmore Hotel. That was quite intriguing because, after all, he was running for president. This was on June 5, 1956. Attorney General Pat Brown was there. They were all Democrats. It was quite a surprise when Republican Goodie Knight walked in! I smile as I remember. Governor Stevenson was most gracious and seemed pleased with our visit. In a story the next day in the Mirror-News I was complimented to see in print what he had said, "Stevenson adds graciously, amid the peppering flashbulbs, 'And you may say Mrs. Knight is the most photogenic woman in politics I've ever met.'" (And my husband beamed.)

Executive Mansion

Sacramento

California

A TRIBUTE TO THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Dedicated to
General Douglas MacArthur
April 1951

How many more "Unknown Soldiers" will there be?
Before the war-makers can see!
Lives disrupted...tears and pain...
Sacrifices all in vain!
What good do sacrifices make
To greedy people who take and take,
Never giving...let the boys give all!
Even life!...The bitter gall
Of scheming men sitting smug and warm.
While our boys are facing death and storm...
And lonely nights...and bitter cold...
Young boys growing old...
Fighting!...dying!...
What's the use?
No end in sight...such sham!...abuse!
Each day for them a thousand years...
What do war-mongers know of tears?
If fight we must...let's fight to WIN!
Then off our conscience blot the sin
Of the "Unknown Soldier's" life we lost...
In God's name make it worth the cost!

Virginia Carlson Knight
Virginia Carlson Knight

Knight: I remember meeting the tall and attractive Senator from Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy, during the Inaugural festivities for President-elect Eisenhower, at a reception at the lovely home of Kay and Philip Graham, publishers of the Washington Post. That descriptive word charisma--Senator John F. Kennedy certainly had it, as history has recorded. We had a delightful conversation with him. (Jacqueline Kennedy was not present.)

The governor and I were devoted to the Grahams. I recall a delightful luncheon at the mansion--just the four of us. Subject? Politics, of course! We were saddened when he died. His charming Kay carried on and has received many honors for the Washington Post--including the Pulitzer Prize for investigation of Watergate.

Another special highlight comes to mind. It was during the festivities of President Eisenhower's Inauguration. At a cocktail party at the home of Washington columnist, Doris Fleeson, the governor and I had a pleasant conversation with the engaging Senator Humphrey! During the Inaugural Ball, the evening of January 21, 1957, I was flattered and pleased that Senator Humphrey walked clear across the ballroom floor of the armory and asked me to dance. And he was a wonderful dancer. And, as we all know, a wonderful human being. He, like Goodwin Knight, was referred to as the Happy Warrior.

Although Governor Earl Warren and Lieutenant Governor Goodwin Knight had some differences in opinion while they served together, our personal relations were always friendly. We met and visited with them after he became the Chief Justice on many occasions--namely the annual Santa Barbara Fiesta. Our mutual dear friend was Thomas Storke, a Democrat, and owner-publisher of the Santa Barbara News Press. We also saw them at the annual Tournament of Roses parade and football game in Pasadena. We four were usually interviewed together before the beautiful and exciting parade!

Nina Warren could not have been more thoughtful and kind to me. Her happiest days were spent in the mansion where their nice family was raised. We both loved the mansion! In our scrapbooks are many personal letters to me from her--many in longhand--even a post card and some lovely rhinestone earrings from Vienna! She also sent me her favorite Modern Swedish Cookbook. It's inscribed "To Virginia--With warmest love--hope you will enjoy my favorite recipes. Nina." January 8, 1957. I treasure this.

On January 26, 1957 (I remember Goodwin and I commented remembering it was General MacArthur's birthday) we were in Kansas City, Missouri. A most flattering invitation was extended to the governor to be the main speaker at a testimonial honoring Frank "Dad" Land, founder of the DeMolay. He was a national figure, dearly beloved for what he had done for our youth. He did not know Goodwin Knight personally, he had admired him from what he had seen and heard about him from across

Knight: the miles. Dad Land, as he was affectionately called, was asked whom he wanted to be the principal speaker for his big night. He could have had President Harry Truman, who was there; Senator Stuart Symington, who also was there that delightful evening. But no, he chose Governor Goodwin J. Knight of California!

And Governor Knight came up to his top level best--came up to all expectations!

Another exciting recollection! I was seated next to the former president, Harry Truman! And I loved it. I couldn't help liking him--even though his action broke my heart when he recalled my hero, General MacArthur. Harry Truman was a delight! He appreciated my not asking, towards the dinner's end, to have him autograph my menu, because that would start a deluge. He remembered--and later sent us an autographed menu of the occasion. I am pleased that history in these later years has been kind to him. He was a good and wonderful man.

Another precious memory for me personally was being present to celebrate former President Herbert Hoover's birthday. My president from Iowa! It was in San Francisco on August 10, 1957. The happy occasion took place on board the "S. S. President Hoover." He was the thirty-first president, and Goodwin was the thirty-first governor--both graduates of Stanford University. Of course, when I met the former president I told him I was from Iowa! And it pleased him hearing this. I am happy, too, that history turned out to be kinder to him while he was still living. I'll never forget the thunderous applause he received at the 1956 Republican Convention in San Francisco. He, too, was a good and honorable man.

There are so many delightful occasions and memories to relate, and I do not like adding a sorrowful note--but it is important. During the 1968 presidential campaign when Senator Robert Kennedy was in California seeking the nomination on the eve of the primary election, his brother Senator Ted Kennedy was in San Francisco and so was Goodwin Knight. Senator Kennedy was broadcasting for the Democrats, and Governor Knight for the Republicans. Word was received that his brother has been shot (just about three miles from here) in the Embassy Room of the Ambassador Hotel. The governor was with Ted Kennedy when they heard this devastating news. Because the Highway Patrol officers always were so fond of the governor, he had a patrol car and driver, which he gave to Senator Ted Kennedy for him to be driven to the airport. That was a sad happening that brought sadness to everyone.

And now Senator Ted Kennedy is still very much in the news trying for the nomination for president.

Knight: There were many top Republicans of high calibre and stature through the years. Joseph Scott (who nominated Herbert Hoover for president, intimate friend, advisor, and confidante to Governor Hiram Johnson) was incensed at the Knowland maneuver, and with his voice ringing denounced the "machinations that forced Governor Knight to abandon his re-election campaign." The Honorable Joseph Scott was dearly beloved throughout the state and the nation and was referred to as Mr. Republican.

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